PENTHOUSE

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR MEN

THE MONEY I$$UE

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FROM THE EDITOR

One of the biggest pitfalls of our education system is its complete disinterest in providing kids with some financial literacy. I remember being forced to take Home Economics where our cranky, gum-chomping teacher taught us to make jelly rolls and sushi. We learned how to sew our own pajama shorts out of bedsheets. We baked cookies. Why did this class even have the word “economics” in the name? I’m seriously asking you, Board of Education.

I wish I’d been taught about finances when I was in school, but I wasn’t. (I probably wouldn’t have listened anyway.) I didn’t even get a financial education in my early twenties. I was too busy being an asshole in a punk band and touring the world. But I finally grew up and realized I had to teach myself. My cousin told me he had turned $5,000 into $20,000 investing in conservative mutual funds. I needed to learn how to do that.

I read Robert Kiyosaki’s *Rich Dad Poor Dad,* David Chilton’s *The Wealthy Barber,* Thomas Sowell’s *Basic Economics,* and Benjamin Graham’s *The Intelligent Investor*. I studied the stock market and played with fake money before starting to gamble myself. I talked to financial advisors and pestered my investment-savvy Polish grandmother for her market tips. (The woman had banked big time. A true genius.) I accosted any expert that would answer my questions.

I was horrible at math as a kid. I had to flirt my way to a passing grade. It was thrilling to finally have a grasp on a system I’d assumed always would be out of my wheelhouse. For the first time in my life, I was excited about money. I even bought the 21-year-old receptionist at our office a copy of Beth Kobliner’s *Get a Financial Life: Personal Finance in Your Twenties and Thirties*. “Don’t be dumb like I was,” I told her. “Learn now.”

Money is a non-issue when you have plenty of it, and everything when you don’t. I’m not trying to be rich. I’m just trying to be fiscally responsible and in control. That’s all that matters.

As the ABBA song goes, “Money, money, money/ always sunny/ in the rich man’s world.” Sure, maybe, but it takes work to get into the club. We’re not all born in the Hollywood Hills with a father who works as a hedge fund manager. The school system isn’t going to make our children fiscally responsible, so it’s up to us to teach our kids. The only person who got rich from baking jelly rolls and cookies is Martha Stewart and she ended up in prison for insider trading. Maybe if she’d been taught about the stock market in school she’d have known that’s a big no-no. Just saying.

Mish Barber-Way
Executive Editor
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IN THE GARDEN OF EVA

December Pet of the Month,
Eva Lovia

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October 2017
Pet of the Month
Ayumi Anime

MAIL DOMINANCE

If they want that crazy "Rocket Man" of North Korea overthrown, all they need to do is take a planeload of the October *Penthouse* issue with Ayumi Anime and airdrop them over the country and they will unify with South Korea in no time. Holy moly! What a goddess!

—James W., via email

[Ed: We back this plan 100 percent and will happily supply the magazines!]

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Steel Yourself

Limited Collector's Edition

At $59, this blade of legendary Damascus steel is a real steal

Damascus steel is the stuff of legend. Using a technique first mastered in the ancient city, swords made from Damascus steel were known to slice gun barrels in half and separate single strands of hair in two, even if the hair simply floated down onto the blade.

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What customers are saying about Stauer knives...

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— R., Lacey, Washington

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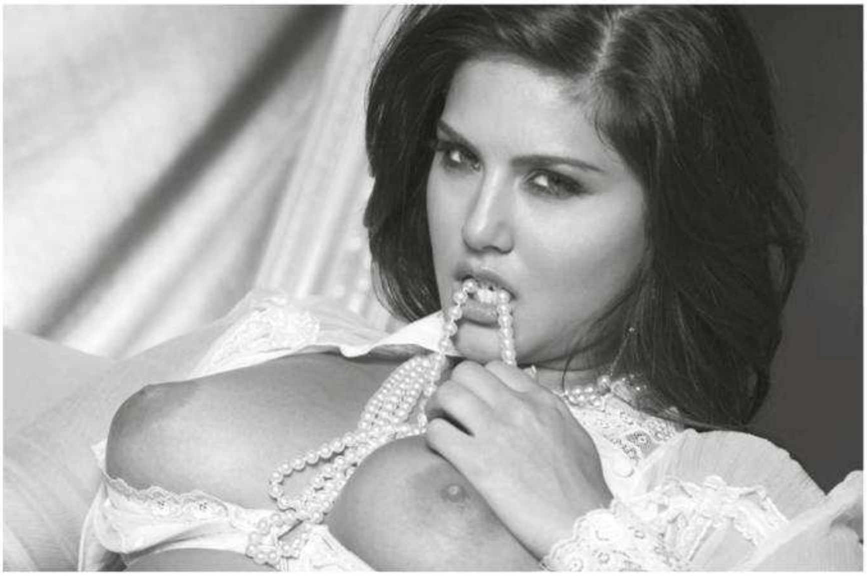
LETTER OF THE MONTH

BEST NEIGHBOR EVER



MARYANNE moved into the house across the street from mine just a few months ago. I saw the trucks parked outside one day, but I didn't meet her until a few weeks later, when we happened to be picking up our morning papers from our driveways at the same time. She was wearing a terry cloth robe, and when I smiled and waved, she uncrossed her arms to wave back. That move made her robe fall open, revealing her totally naked body.

Shocked to the core, I stood there stunned. I gave the universe a mental high-five, assuming it was a lucky accident, but then she winked and smiled at me. Maryanne bent to pick up her paper, and then crossed the street. She extended her hand and shook mine, her robe still slightly open as we exchanged names.

"I've always wanted to flash a stranger," she said, rattling off the words like she had to say them quickly or lose her nerve. Her breasts rose and fell with her rapid breaths. Our hands were still touching, and my eyes were locked on her full lips. "It doesn't look like you minded," she continued.

A shiver shot up my spine and my dick twitched. Then she winked once again and strutted back to her house.

I didn't see Maryanne for the next three days, but she was on my mind constantly. When we met next, she was washing her car in her driveway as I returned home from an errand. I waved and she blew me a kiss as I parked. By the time I opened my door, Maryanne was standing beside my car.

"Don't worry, I won't flash you this time," she laughed. The bikini she had on barely covered her nipples, and the tiny triangle between her legs was so tight that I could see the groove between her pussy lips. This chick was the best neighbor ever.

"I need a big favor," she said, stroking my bare arm with her fingertips as she told me about her broken lawn mower. Sparks shot between us as I followed her to her garage to take a look.

As I squatted beside the mower, Maryanne stood so close that I could feel the heat from her body on my face. My head was level with the crotch of her yellow bikini, and I fought every urge to lean forward and rip down those tiny bikini bottoms.

"I know what you're thinking," she whispered, stroking my cheek with her hand. "I want it, too." I blushed and swallowed deeply as the image of kissing her pussy grew more real to me. Then she laughed softly and lifted her bare foot so that it touched the bulge in my pants. My dick throbbed against her wiggling toes. "I dreamed about you last night," she said with a smile, massaging my shaft with her foot as she spoke.

I hadn't been that hot and horny in years. Giving me a wide smile, she sucked in her breath and reached down to pull aside the crotch of her bikini bottoms. I licked my lips and swallowed as she touched a finger to her cunt. "See what you've done to me," she teased as her finger traveled slowly up and down the slick crease. "You've made me all wet."

Too stunned to speak, I sat there and watched her get her fingers good and damp. When they were completely coated, she extended her hand and painted my lips with her warm nectar. I licked her fingers clean as her bare foot continued to massage my stiff dick through my pants. I was on the brink of shooting my load.

I was ready to dive face-first into her wet pussy when her cellphone started rattling on the garage workbench. She turned to get it, saying she'd been waiting for an important call, and I told her that I'd go get a new spark plug for her mower and return in a little bit.

I wasn't sure what might happen between us when I got back, but the possibilities that I came up with gave me the first erection that I'd ever had in an automotive supply store. I rushed home as quickly as I could, but Maryanne's car was gone, so I had lunch and watched part of a ball game on TV as I waited for her to come home. I was determined to finish what we started.

As soon as I heard her car pull into her driveway, I leaped out of my seat, grabbed the spark plug, and headed across the street. She opened her front door before I could knock and invited me inside.

"I got the spark plug," I said as I followed

Maryanne into her house. She stopped at a small table beside her sofa and picked up a long plastic object. I couldn't believe my eyes—it was a vibrator.

"I wish I had asked you to pick up some batteries for this as well," she said, and then lifted the vibrator to her lips and licked the tip. "I really needed it after this morning. I've changed my panties twice and finally decided it was a waste putting on another pair.

"It looks like your battery never runs down," she continued as she stared at the lump in the front of my pants. She moved closer, not stopping until her breasts were almost touching my chest. I could feel her warm breath on my face, and it took every ounce of willpower to keep my hands off her body. She looked into my eyes for a long time before she spoke again.

"Luckily, I bought some batteries while I was out, and I was just about to test them. Would you like to watch?"

I held my breath, but Maryanne didn't wait for my answer. Instead, she took my hand, led me to her sofa, and pushed me down into the seat. Good thing, too, because I was in a sex-starved trance. I had never dreamed that I would ever meet a woman so totally horny and wild.

GIVING ME A WILD SMILE, SHE SUCKED IN HER BREATH AND REACHED DOWN TO PULL ASIDE THE CROTCH OF HER BIKINI BOTTOMS.

As soon as I was sitting, she took off her shorts and T-shirt. There was nothing under them but her naked breasts and pussy. I licked my lips and watched her touch her clit with the vibrator.

Letting out a long, satisfied sigh, Maryanne pushed about an inch of the vibrator into her slick opening. Then she thrust the whole toy into her dripping pussy three or four times before stopping to reach over and unzip my pants. My dick was so hard that it jumped right out. She gave it a squeeze and then moved so that she was straddling my lap.

Maryanne inched down slowly, her hot, wet pussy swallowing my stiff dick in a single gulp. I gave each of her bouncing breasts a kiss, and then she leaned forward and pressed her mouth to mine. Our lips met and our tongues wrestled as she rocked on my stiff pole.

This was the hottest fuck of my life, and I fought to make it last as long as possible. But by the time she hit what had to be her third orgasm, I gave in to the urge to fill her tight pussy with my hot cream. She was too much for me. When I hit my peak, she cried out as she came again. Her cunt pulsed around my shaft, coaxing one more tiny blast of liquid from my balls. It was the hardest orgasm of my life.

I left soon after that, too drained to repair the lawn mower or do much of anything else. Besides, that gave me a good excuse to go back to her house sometime very soon. I'm sure she'll have no idea what to do with the spark plug I left on her living room table, but I know she'll find something to do with the hard-on in my pants.

—John C., Los Alamos, New Mexico

CONTINUED ON PAGE 126

Seeing is believing. When you've had the encounter you've been hoping for, let us know about it! Send your letters to: *Penthouse* magazine, 8944 Mason Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311, or email us at letters@penthouse.com.

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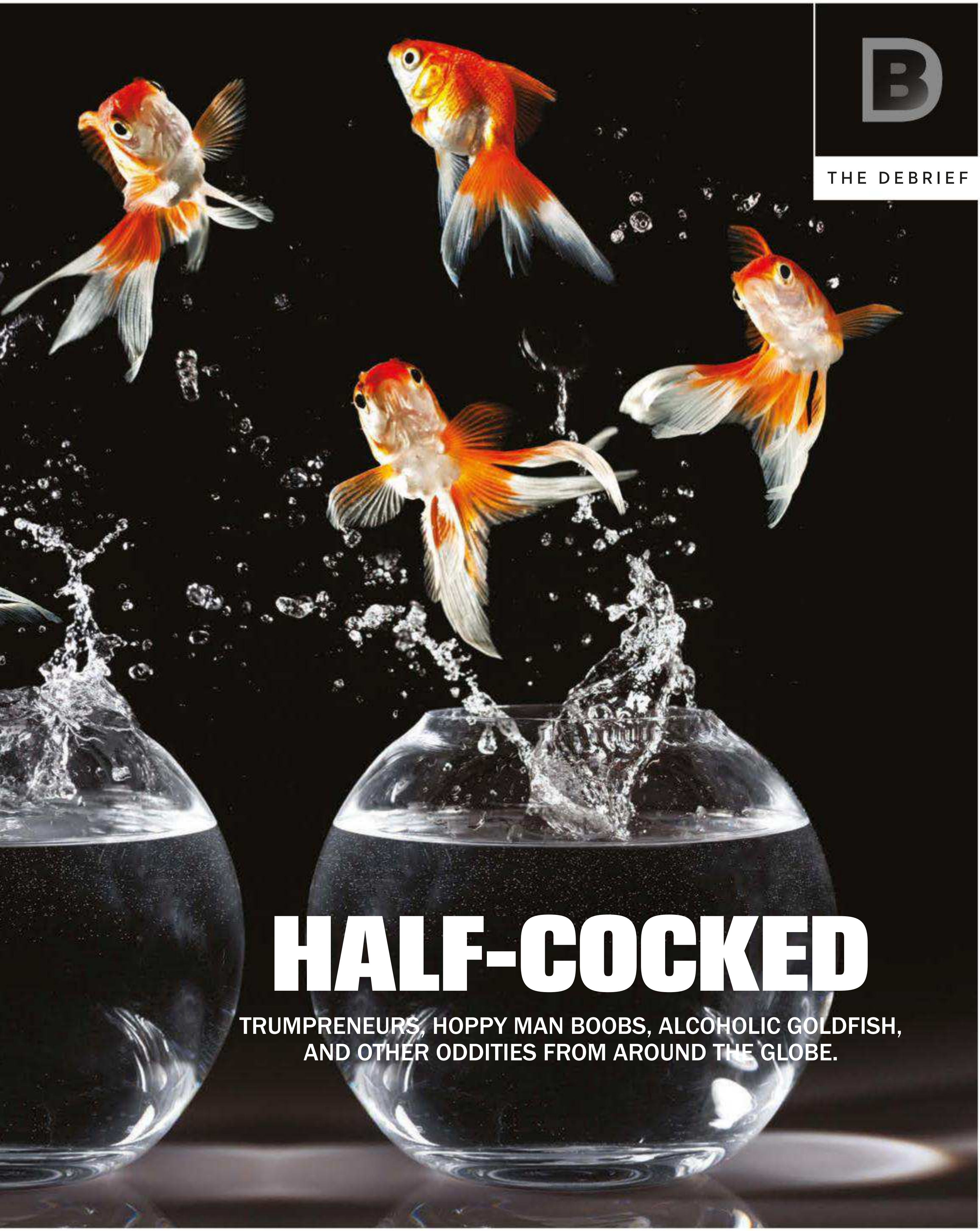

HALF-COCKED

TRUMPRENEURS, HOPPY MAN BOOBS, ALCOHOLIC GOLDFISH, AND OTHER ODDITIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE.

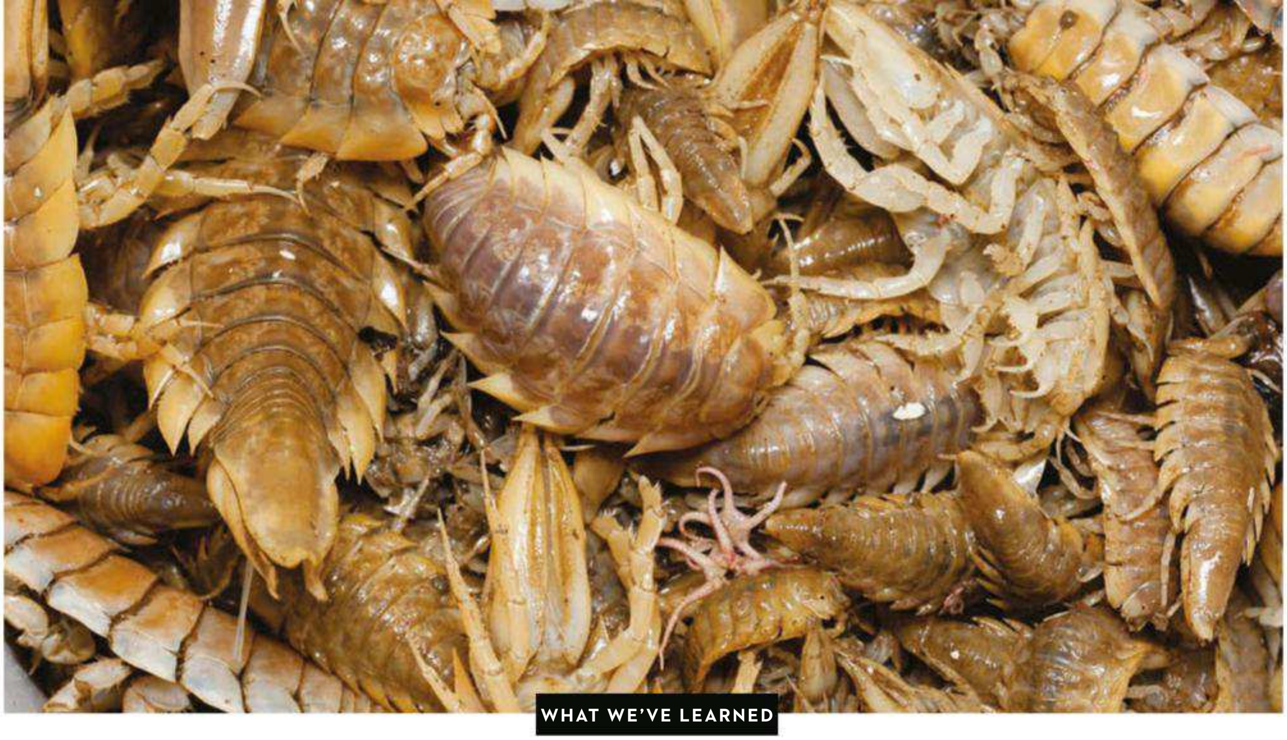

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / SOLODOV ALEKSEI

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

(SEMI) NAKED LUNCH

AUSTRALIA is filled with freaky-ass critters that do fucked-up things to us poor, innocent humans, but this summer boasted one of the creepier encounters in recent years.

In August, Aussie teenager Sam Kanizay was waist-deep in water at the Dendy Street Beach in Brighton, soaking his legs after a football match, when he felt "pins and needles" in his ankles and feet. Ignoring the sensation, he stayed in the water for over 30 minutes. When he finally got out, his lower legs were "pouring" blood.

"It sort of looked like hundreds of little pinholes of pin-sized bites distributed all over my ankle and the top of my foot," he said to 3AW Radio Melbourne afterward.

Kanizay's parents took him to the hospital, where doctors were stumped by the teen's injuries. Some of them believed he'd been attacked by marine isopods, aka sea lice, which can leave pinprick holes in human flesh.

Wanting to investigate further, Sam's father returned to the beach the next day with a "meat-filled pool net" and posted a video of what happened next: hundreds of disgusting little sea creatures devouring said meat.

Alistair Poore, an associate professor at the University of New South Wales, told the *New York Times* that the animals in the video aren't sea lice, but amphipods, which are not known to bite humans. "You can attract a lot of animals in the sea with raw meat," he said. "Even though it's interesting, it doesn't prove to me they were the ones that bit his legs."

Isopods, amphipods, no one fucking knows. Best stick to the pool, mates.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / NOMAD_SOUL

BREAST MEN

WE all know about beer guts. Many of us even have them. But have you heard of beer boobs?

Hold on to your man-knockers, fellas, because it seems those IPAs we enjoy so much can cause gynecomastia, aka moobs.

The culprit in this modern-day tragedy is hops, the female flowers of the hop plant, which contain plant estrogens and give IPAs their bitter, zesty, and citric flavors.

It seems that menopausal women are better off drinking IPAs, because many will benefit from the boost in estrogen; it also can help them sleep.

Men with weight issues, however, might want to think twice: Not only can hops contribute to moob development, they also cause "brewer's drop," or erectile dysfunction, which some men experience after drinking too much.

Mushy breasts and flaccid penis, all in one package? Watch out, ladies!

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM /S PHOTOS

COCKSTOPPER

IN the rural town of Marchwood, on the southern coast of England, a retired businessman was on trial for harassing his neighbors, a lesbian couple, after their rooster drove him to the brink of madness.

Neil Dymott, 56, allegedly taunted Helen Richardson and Paula Holland for months. "On one occasion he shouted across the road that I was a 'fucking lezza' and proceeded to play 'When a Man Loves a Woman' on repeat for an hour," Richardson said.

Dymott also blasted songs by Queen on his car stereo, the doors and trunk of his Jaguar open, in an attempt to cover up the crowing. On several occasions he was heard shouting, "Shut that cockerel up or I'll sort you!" And he repeatedly threatened to sue the women for negatively affecting the value of his million-dollar home.

"[The crowing] would start as early as 4/4:30 A.M. and could go on until 10 P.M.," Dymott told the court. "These are not British birds, these are birds going on and on."

The offending rooster, an American breed, was killed in 2015, and the couple quickly replaced it with another, which died a few months later. "We think he was poisoned," said Richardson. Dymott's fury raged on, however, and he blamed the couple for their neighbor's rooster, and then for another rooster crowing in farmland nearby.

After a two-day trial, Dymott was acquitted of harassment, but got slapped with a restraining order, prohibiting him from contacting the women for two years. Richardson said she and her partner were "exhausted" by the whole ordeal, and admitted they'd like to buy another rooster soon—perhaps a more proper British cock this time around.

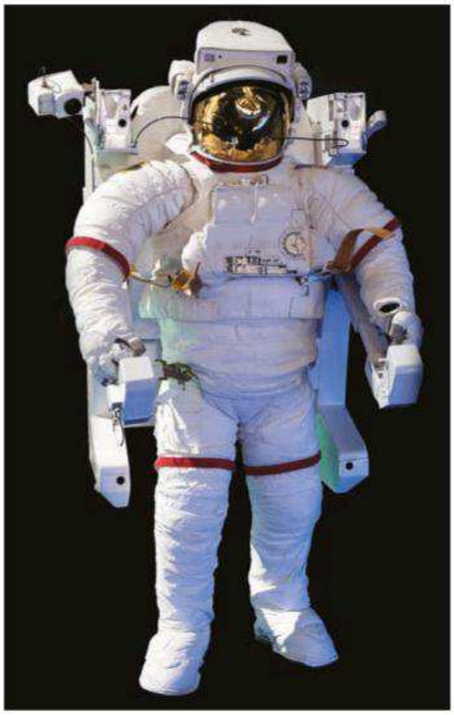

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / ALESSANDRO COLLE

THRIFT SCORE

ANY proper thrifter knows that it pays to dig.

Take, for instance, 24-year-old Skyler Ashworth, who was sorting through a plastic bin of old sweaters at a Salvation Army in Titusville, Florida, when he came across a white jumpsuit with a NASA logo on it. Then he uncovered five more suits, all in blue, with the same logo.

"They were kind of in a weird corner," Talia Rappa, Ashworth's 20-year-old thrifting buddy, told CBS News in August. "[Skylar] pulled them all out at first then brought the whole handful over to me."

They paid 20 cents for each suit, a total of $1.20.

Rappa and Ashworth then took their booty to the nearby American Space Museum, where experts confirmed that these were, in fact, uniforms worn by NASA ground crew and astronauts between 1982-85. We're going out on a limb and guessing their decision was aided by the name tags on the suits: space shuttle astronauts George "Pinky" Nelson, Robert Parker, and Owen Garriott, and payload specialist Charles Walker.

It remains a mystery how the uniforms ended up at this Salvation Army, which is about 25 miles from Cape Canaveral, or how long they'd been there. But finders keepers, right?

Good karma definitely seems to be at play here, because Rappa is an astrophysics student at the University of Central Florida, and Ashworth, whose parents worked for NASA, was recently accepted into the aerospace program at Eastern Florida State College.

The American Space Museum will be auctioning the suits in November, and each is expected to fetch $5,000 or more. Rappa and Ashworth plan to donate some of the proceeds to the museum, and use the rest to help foot their astronomical (*ack!*) college bills.

THE COMFORT OF FISHES

HUMANS aren't the only species to warm themselves with booze in cold weather. It turns out that goldfish also rely on alcohol to get through the winter months.

Unlike most fish, which die when the water is depleted of oxygen in icy temperatures, goldfish and their wild cousin, crucian carp, are able to survive for months in low-oxygen water.

Researchers from universities in Oslo, Sweden, and Liverpool, England, discovered the fishes' ability to convert their anaerobically produced lactic acid (which fatally builds up in most living things when deprived of oxygen) into ethanol, which is then expelled from their gills into the water.

Dr. Michael Berenbrink, an evolutionary physiologist at the University of Liverpool, said that the blood-alcohol content in these fish can exceed the drunk-driving limit.

Now the obvious question: Do the shitfaced goldfish then start fights, have sex with hookers, eat cheeseburgers, and get tattoos?

"Under the ice they try to minimize the energy expenditure," Berenbrink told Gizmodo. "In a way the behavior changes because they're just sitting there. We can't really distinguish if that's from the alcohol or the survival strategy."

Coincidentally, at the same time we discover that goldfish can (literally) turn to alcohol, we also learned that humans can now (emotionally) turn to goldfish. You see, in a hotel in Belgium, lonely guests at the Hotel Charleroi can rent one for around $4 a night.

The perk is nothing new, but in September someone tweeted a picture of a fish with the caption: "My friend is staying in a hotel in Belgium. They've offered her the option of renting a fish for the night if she's lonely." It was re-tweeted over 10,000 times, with mixed reactions. Some people were into it, while other snowflakes got angry about the exploitation of animals and voiced concern about the size of the bowl in the photo.

Hotel manager David Dillon told the *Independent*, "We started a few years ago. The idea was to surprise our guests, as we always try to do.... I can also tell you that we take very good care of our fish; they have been with us for over four years now, so if they were not taken care of they would have died a long time ago."

Dillon continued: "They have a big fish tank in the housekeeping department, with a shelter, oxygen, and plants."

And if the water happens to freeze while the goldfish are in there…well, that's not so bad now, is it?

ALL DAY I DREAM ABOUT SPEWING

THANK God for Germans. They are so smart.

In honor of this year's 184th Oktoberfest, which took place in Munich September 16 through October 3, the Herzogenaurach-based company Adidas launched a pair of limited-edition vomit- and beer-proof sneakers.

Here's how they work: As the Oktoberfester merrily binge-drinks and power-eats his way through 85 acres of festivities, then decides to hit the Alpina Bahn (aka the world's largest portable roller coaster), the sneakers' nifty DPBR (durable puke and beer repellant) coating will keep hot/cold projectile liquids at bay. The wearer may end up passed out in a sea of chunks, pee, and Weizenbier, but his tootsies will stay clean and dry.

Adidas marketed these $240 sneakers as "made from the finest leather with DPBR coating," with "rich embroidery to match your lederhosen," an "inner lining with red/white micro-check tablecloth for that special alpine flavor," and "Prost" (cheers) embroidered in gold on the sides.

Of course the sneakers sold out in a week, but rest easy, the same effect can be accomplished by a pair of galoshes (or "rubbers" as our grandpas used to call them), which you slip on over your own non-puke-resistant kicks. Amazon sells them for about $15.

Prost!

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / HALFPOINT

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / PHICHAI

MONDO SQUIRTO

THOUGH it can be tempting to wonder why some of our latter-day Leonardo da Vinci's who invent stuff simply to break Guinness world records–like SoCal's Mark Rober, who built the world's biggest super soaker–don't use their powers for the good of humanity, we here at *Penthouse* like to look at the bright side: At least these creative whizzes aren't harnessing their big *Popular Mechanics* brains to build weapons of actual harm.

It's a hobby, this kind of competitive inventing, and as we've heard many times, hobbies are healthy (unless it's Norman Bates-style bird taxidermy or whatnot).

Plus, who knows, maybe the mega super soaker will indeed spin off into some kind of engineering or scientific breakthrough that makes life on this mortal coil–which, let's be honest, can suck sometimes–a little easier on body and soul.

Stranger things have happened. (Haven't they?)

Rober, a retired NASA Jet Propulsion Lab engineer, topped last year's world-record largest Nerf gun with this year's Big Bertha of a water gun.

Six months in the making, boosted by tanks of pressurized nitrogen gas in the handle, it's seven feet long and shoots water at 243 mph, reaching a PSI of 2400 (eight times stronger than a fire hose; a fair bit stronger than light-duty pressure washers)–a force terrific enough, as the inventor's YouTube videos demonstrate, to shatter glass, explode Coke cans, and saw a watermelon in half.

What's up next for our Daedalus? Who can say? The Germans topped their WWI Big Bertha howitzer with WWII's insane Heavy Gustav–1,500 tons, 150 feet long, 40 feet tall. No doubt Rober is in his garage right now, cooking up something bigger and more YouTube-friendly, aiming for another crazy-ass Guinness record in 2018.

MATTRESS MAGIC

RETIRED stripper Shaney Marie, 31, has gone on to fame, and a little bit of fortune, not in Hollywood, like a lot of ex-strippers (Carmen Electra, Catherine Zeta-Jones, screenwriter Diablo Cody), or in music (Courtney Love, Lady Gaga), but in the incense and chanting world of Wiccan white witchery. But since Marie's focus is sex, it should also be said that she hasn't stepped that far away from her original career platform.

Yup, she's a sex witch. A carnal priestess. A boudoir necromancer.

She ties the two careers together by pointing out that it was in flesh palaces where she realized men needed a deeper connection to their sexuality, one more spiritualized, subtle, and erotic at once. Which is where her brand of healing sex sorcery comes in.

In recent years, this New Zealand-born Australian resident, who identifies as both pansexual and eco-sexual (she desires men, women, and anything in between; and is also capable of being aroused by nature), has branched out to helping women with their desires and erotic natures as well, including by sharing sexy pole-dancing tips.

Big on earthy, ancient shame-free pagan traditions, Marie runs workshops, teaching tantric sexuality and sexual empowerment. There's praying to "love altars."

This fall she took her operation to Europe. No doubt America is next.

We dig her attitude. "Basically your sexual energy is like a super power," Marie says on her website, and it's her job, as "sexuality guide," to unlock this power.

The flowers she wears in her hair, the hippie dresses she favors, her smokin' bod–get Shaney Marie a booth at Coachella or Burning Man and she'd do a booming business.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / VOLODYMYR TVERDOKHLIB

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / MEGA PIXEL

SNEEZE-OCRACY

SNEEZING plays a small but special role in two of our favorite things here at *Penthouse*: sex and comedy. The latter first. In a classic scene in Woody Allen's 1977 film *Annie Hall,* nebbishy Alvie Singer, played by Allen, is closely eyeballing a cigarette case loaded with coke, contemplating trying blow for the first time. Moments after the friend who handed him the drug informs Alvie that he's looking at stuff worth $2K an ounce, Alvie sneezes, scattering the precious marching powder everywhere.

As for sex, the tie-in is this: A small number of people sneeze at the very thought of nookie. Scientists call it "sexually induced sneezing." First noted medically in 1897, it was confirmed in a 2008 study, with researchers surmising it results from either crossed wires in the central nervous system or because there's a small amount of "erectile tissue in the nose" that can start to tickle when these people fantasize about a hot romp.

Speaking of aroused, zoologists around the world recently got excited at new research revealing that African wild dogs in Botswana cast a yea vote for going on a hunt by sneezing. Animals that travel and forage or hunt in groups need a way to reach a consensus that the time to roll is now. Capuchin monkeys trill. Gorillas grunt. And meerkats, as the *New York Times* pointed out, call to each other. These wild dogs go *a-choo!*

The pooches spend a lot of the day sleeping. Then when one of them issues a sneeze, the others either follow suit or just side-eye the sneezers. Scientists call it a rally when a bunch of the dogs all vote yea with a sneeze. The number of these snorty *"I'm in!"* vocalizations was the single best predictor for whether a hunt would happen.

Unsurprisingly, the leader of the pack—call him the Big Sneeze—had the most luck when it came to starting a sneeze rally. Scientists aren't sure if the sound is voluntary or instinctual. But they say it's the first time sneezing with this kind of social function has been observed in nature. And in case you're wondering, a rally does not include "Bless you" woofs, or "Gesundheit" barks.

ATM S.O.S.

YOU know that unhappy *click* when you leave a hotel room without your keycard and only remember this after the reinforced door slams shut and auto-locks?

Multiply that by a hundred-fold and you're in the headspace of a Corpus Christi ATM repairman who stepped into a small chamber behind a Bank of America cash machine this July only to realize after the door sealed shut that not only was he without the swipecard he needed to exit the room, but he had also left his cellphone in the work van.

It's an *Oh, shit!* for the ages.

Apparently not a full-blown claustrophobic, or someone who had just read Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," the trapped tech—after employing the time-honored method of yelling your ass off for help, to no avail—had to get creative.

He scrawled a note saying "Please help I'm here," explaining that he didn't have his phone, and asking the note finder to call his boss at the number provided.

Then he waited until a customer used the ATM and slipped the note into the receipt chute. Bingo. The customer got the note, somehow realized it wasn't a wacky *Candid Camera*-style stunt, and called the cops. As one of the officers later explained, they thought it was a joke at first. Then they heard the guy shouting from behind the cash dispenser.

Word is he wrote another note shortly after being liberated. He used huge letters and taped the note to his work van's dashboard. It read: "DO NOT FUCKING FORGET SWIPECARD AND PHONE!!!"

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / ICONIC BESTIARY

TREASURE MAP
Blody Cape
Ash Beach
Fairy Hills
Snake Islands
CORAL SEA
Little Bay
Skull Rock
Red Lake
Blak Gulf
Fort Francis
Frog river
Crocodile Creek
Devil's Mouth
Maya Ruines
Castleton
Buccaneers Bay
Ghost's Hills
Shadow Mountains
Lost Cape
Parrot's Bay
MIDLAND PORT
Rainbow Island
SOUTHERN SEA
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BOOZE BOOTY

PIRATES have inspired some pretty great things. The eyepatch and pegleg look. "Friggin' in the Riggin'" by the Sex Pistols. The Pittsburgh baseball team logo.

Hell, throw Disneyland's Pirates of the Caribbean amusement ride in there (its audio-animatronics were *the shit* when it debuted in 1967), right alongside John Carpenter's terrifying horror movie *The Fog*. Pirate purists might point out that this movie's scraggly demonic mariners out for revenge are not officially ghost pirates, but they're close enough. *The Fog* also features Carpenter's then-wife Adrienne Barbeau in full curvaceous bloom, in case these killer sea spawn don't get you to watch.

Of course pirates also have to answer for Long John Silver's perilous seafood and International Talk Like a Pirate Day, so the news is not all good when it comes to buccaneer inspiration. But that dude who buried a bottle of vodka on the grounds of a musical festival and said pirates gave him the idea? Genius. Somewhere Blackbeard's smiling.

Sick of the outrageous costs of festival beer and wine, New Yorker Alex Diamond, a four-year veteran of Electric Zoo, the Labor Day weekend NYC electronic music fest, cased the Randalls Island grounds three weeks before the event. Finding a suitable spot, he hid a Nalgene water bottle full of the clear liquor and recorded the precise location using GPS and Google maps. On the big day, he had his crew of five stand around the spot to block the views of security guards and CCTV and unearthed his liquid treasure with a small trowel.

ARRRR, party on! Things turned out so well it's almost like Diamond buried magic beans. After his Facebook post detailing the caper went viral, he scored a book deal to write about ways to save money at music festivals and other kinds of pricey events.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / IPINGEBAT

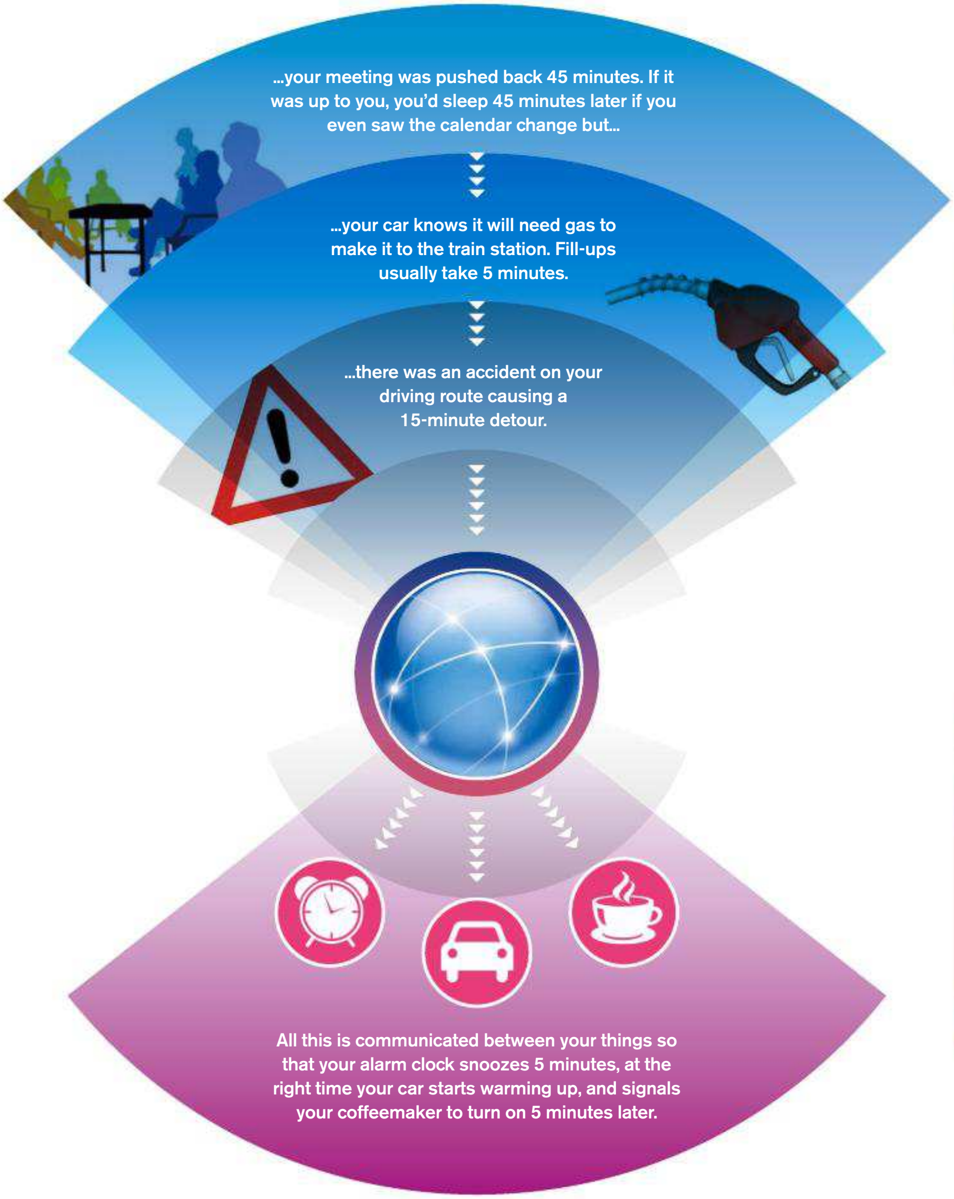
DOWNLOAD

THE INTERNET OF THINGS

The Internet of Things is the biggest thing that, until recently, we'd never heard of. It's currently a human-to-human affair, but that is changing. What exactly is it, and how does it work?

WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE

These things are starting to talk to each other and develop their own intelligence. Imagine a morning scenario where...

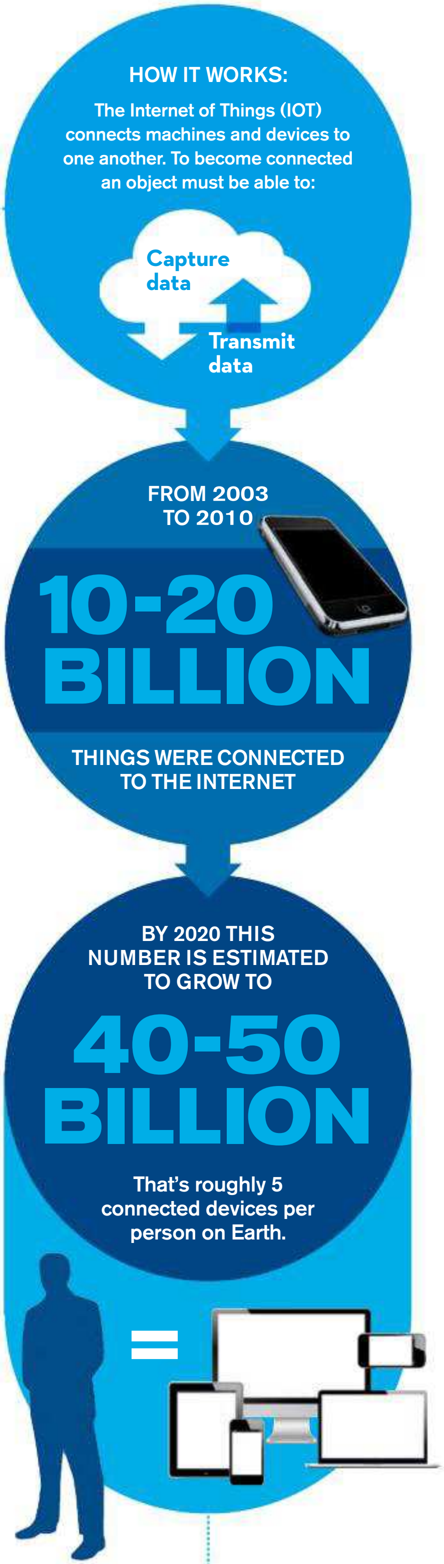


...your meeting was pushed back 45 minutes. If it was up to you, you'd sleep 45 minutes later if you even saw the calendar change but...

...your car knows it will need gas to make it to the train station. Fill-ups usually take 5 minutes.

...there was an accident on your driving route causing a 15-minute detour.

All this is communicated between your things so that your alarm clock snoozes 5 minutes, at the right time your car starts warming up, and signals your coffeemaker to turn on 5 minutes later.



HOW IT WORKS:

The Internet of Things (IOT) connects machines and devices to one another. To become connected an object must be able to:

FROM 2003 TO 2010

10-20 BILLION

THINGS WERE CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET

BY 2020 THIS NUMBER IS ESTIMATED TO GROW TO

40-50 BILLION

That's roughly 5 connected devices per person on Earth.

WHO WILL BENEFIT

BANKING

Banks are participating in tech trials and tweaking their mobile apps for smart watches. Imagine being able to glance at your watch and immediately see if your bank account is in a "green," "yellow" or "red" status.

RETAIL

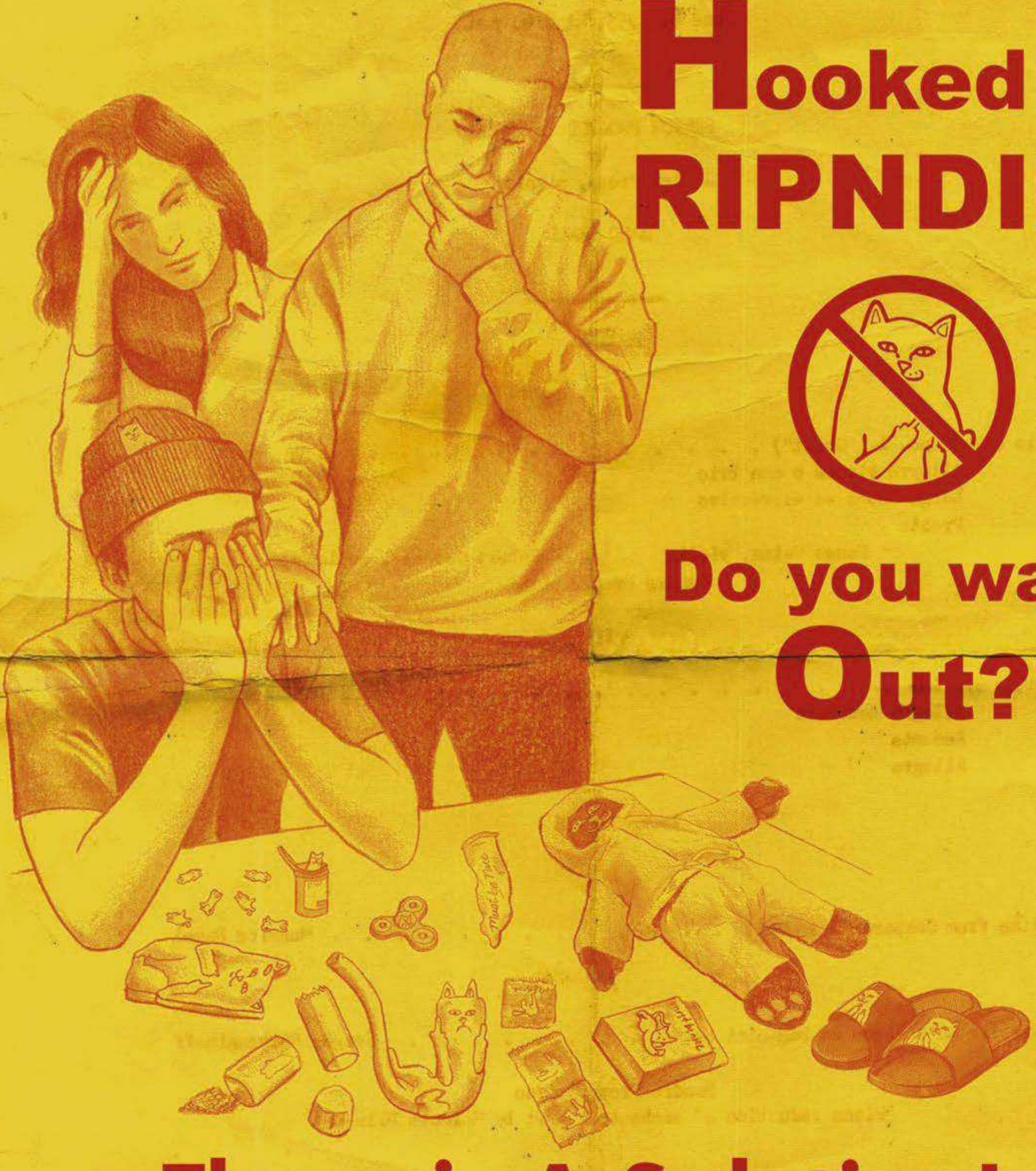
Optimized checkout lines, smart grocery replenishing, understanding shopper behavior, and automated order fulfillment. This will ensure customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.

HEALTH CARE

Smart infant monitors, insulin injection trackers, and even prescription pills. This will improve patient care, reduce costs, and aid disease management and prevention.

the THRILL *that* KILLS

Hooked on RIPNDIP?



Do you want Out?

There is A Solution!

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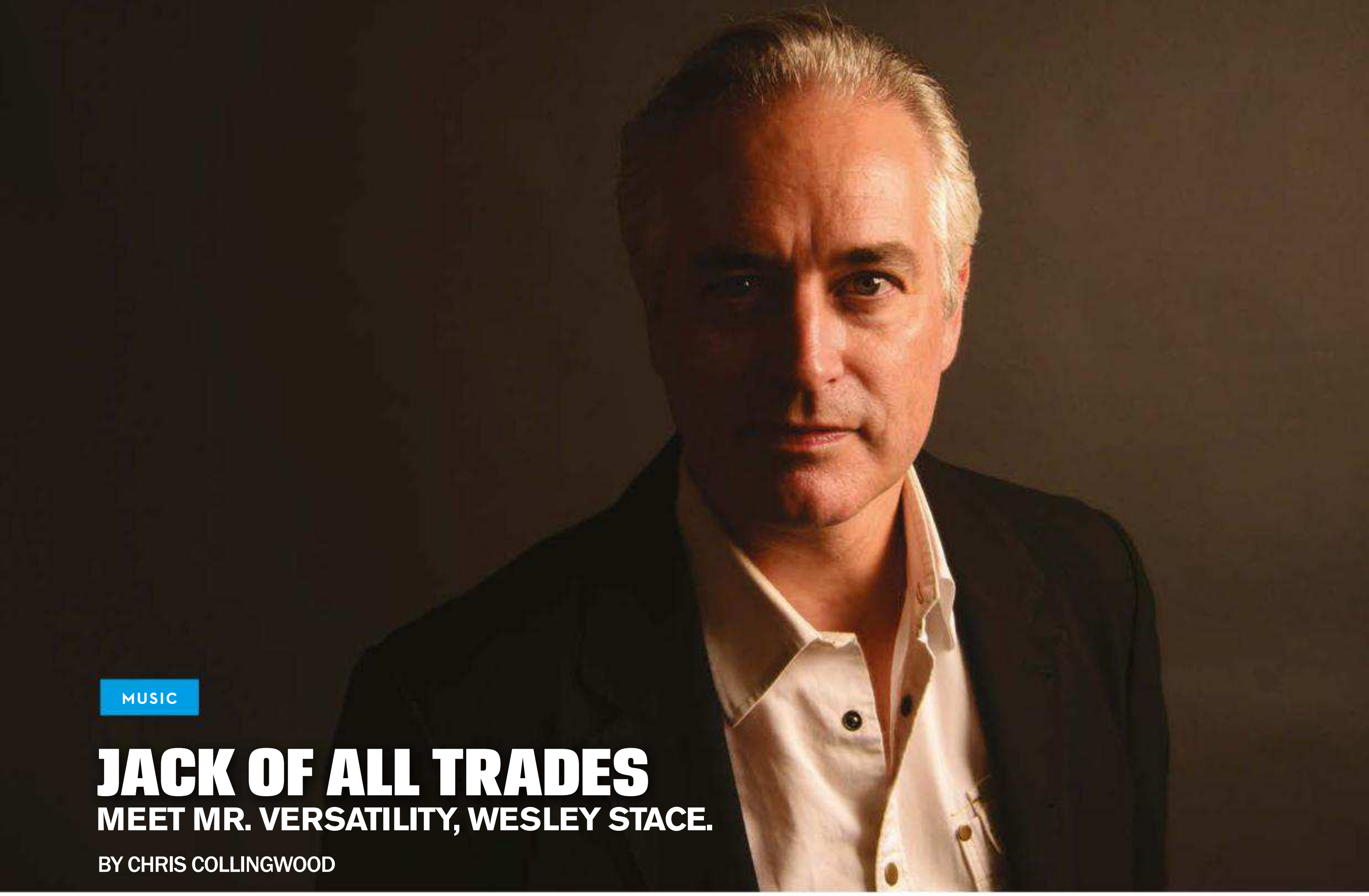
please call if you or a loved one needs help

1-877-RIPNDIP



MUSIC

JACK OF ALL TRADES

MEET MR. VERSATILITY, WESLEY STACE.

BY CHRIS COLLINGWOOD

MOST musicians in my generation, when we let our parents know of our rock 'n' roll dreams early on, were treated to some variation of *Great, have your fun, but you better have a backup plan because you're going to starve.*

Is it different today, with helicopter parents and participation medals and gushing praise for the modest efforts of average children? Maybe so, but on the other hand, the music industry is in way shittier shape. Enter it now and...well, you better have a backup plan. Like our parents used to say.

Anyway, this stuff was on my mind as I pondered the mosaic career of Wesley Stace, who emerged in England in the late eighties under the stage name John Wesley Harding. Back then he was just a protest singer with a keen lyrical sense, one of many great British acts riding the era's post-New Wave boom.

This year Stace, now using his real name (kind of), released his 17th album, *Wesley Stace's John Wesley Harding*. It's a bittersweet collection that showcases a literate, meticulous craftsman in fine form. Backing him are Minneapolis quartet the Jayhawks (*Paging Mr. Proust,* their own ninth release, came out last year), who sound both spontaneous and remarkably solid here, despite logging just two rehearsal days before recording started.

Making albums with established bands is kind of a thing Stace does, having previously done so with the Decemberists and the Minus 5, a side project from R.E.M. guitarist Peter Buck. "I really like the process," Stace told me. "If I've committed to something with [a band], it's never in my mind going to go wrong. Musicians are more versatile than people think they are."

Since the music industry tanked earlier in the millennium, musicians have been scrambling to stay afloat. The example of Stace stands out, as he has regularly delivered new music while also stepped adroitly into other arenas. He's been a professor at three universities. He's published four novels (including the critically acclaimed *Misfortune,* from 2005). Now he's working on a new book—a memoir of legendary choreographer Mark Morris, a personal friend.

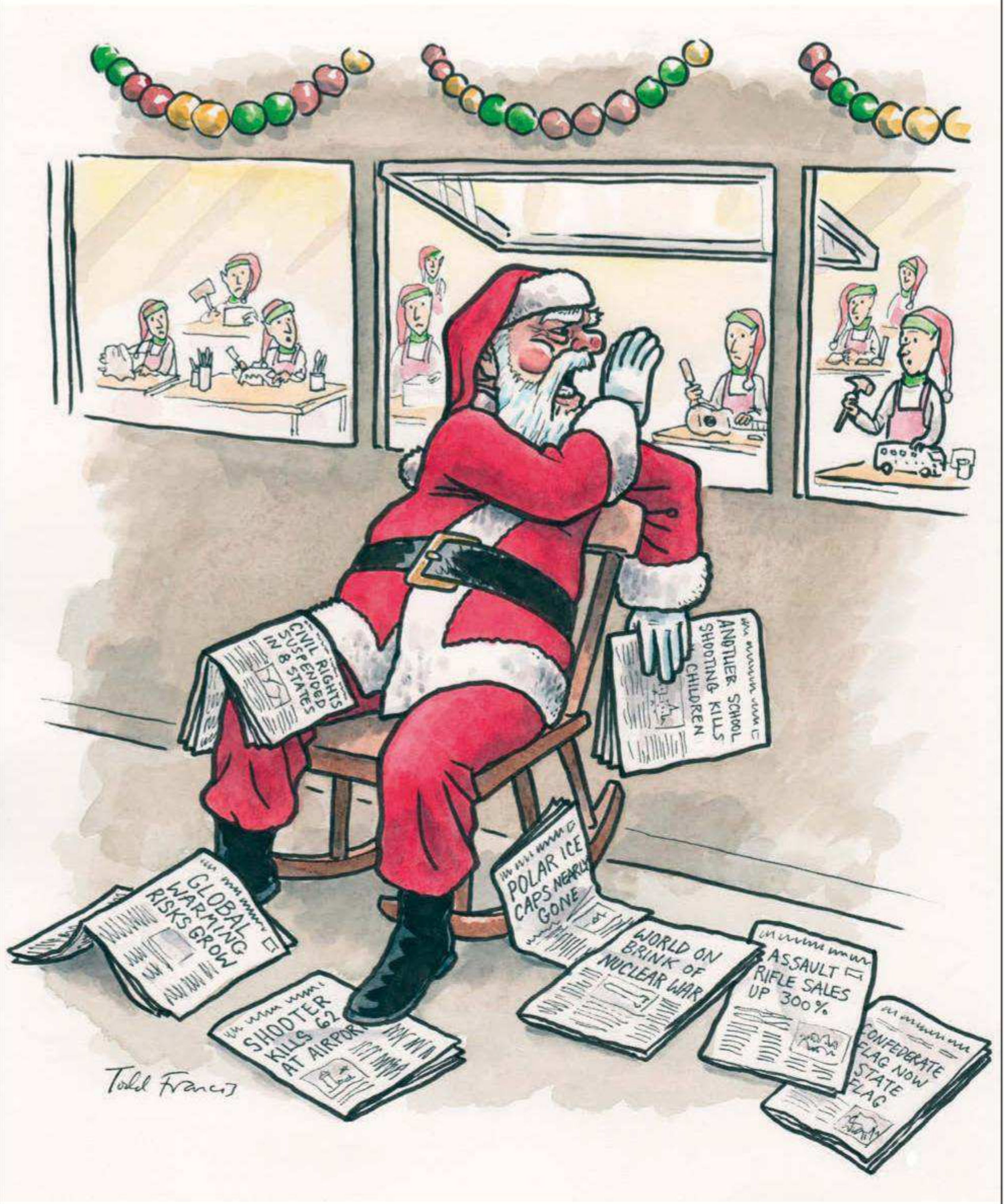
Stace even hosts a nationally broadcast variety show, *Wesley Stace's Cabinet of Wonders*. It got its start when a book publicist suggested he throw a party for *Misfortune* and invite musical friends. That led to more such gatherings, then a home at City Winery, then NPR syndication. Now it's practically a New York institution, a very hot ticket featuring musicians, writers, comedians, and assorted oddballs.

Comic Eugene Mirman is a frequent cohost. Fashion icon Isaac Mizrahi recently sang cabaret songs. A natural emcee, Stace brings boundless energy to each performance, introducing guests Shakespearean-fool-style with wry narrative poems about their books or albums.

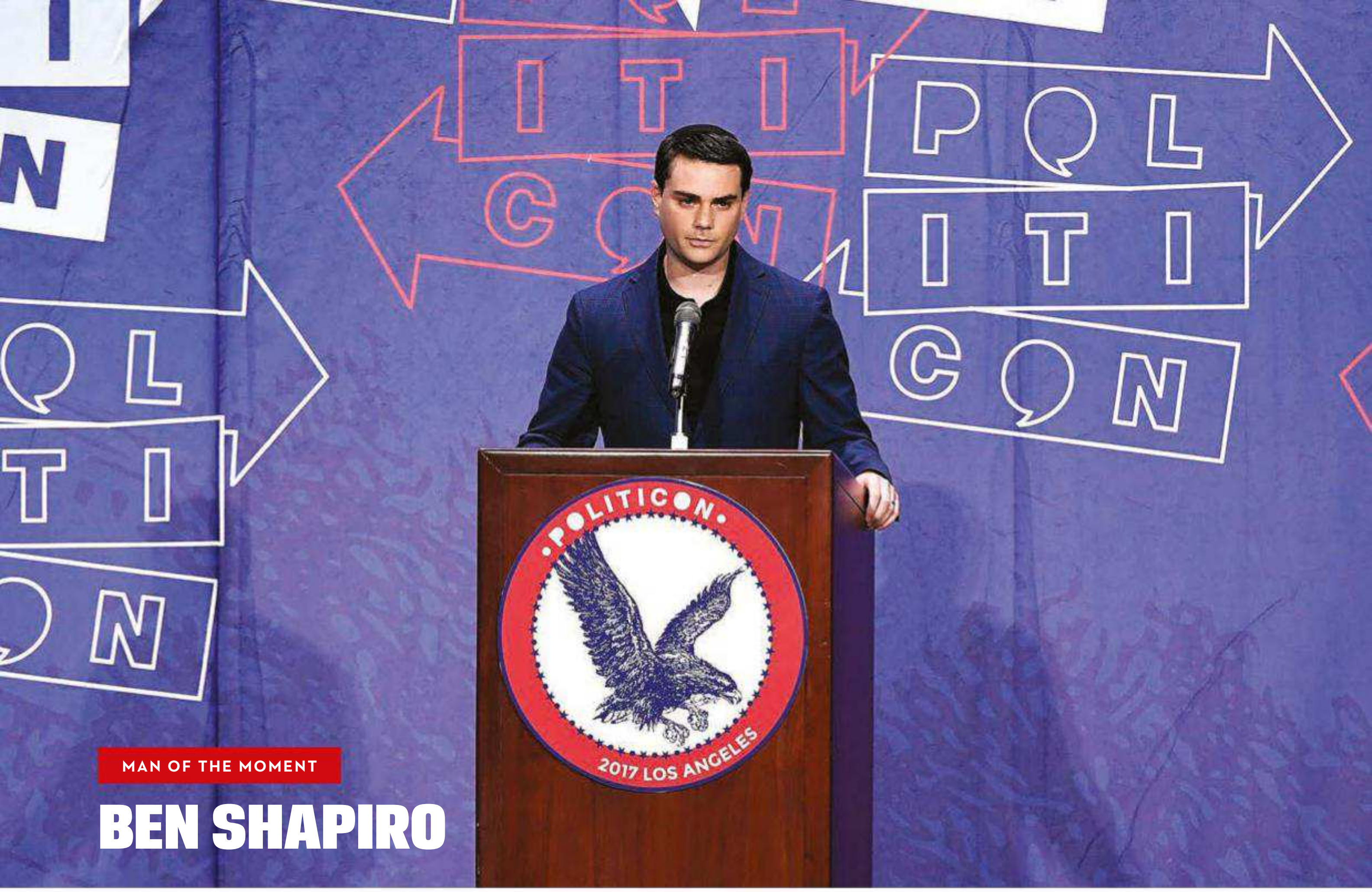
It's an unpredictable affair—will you get to hear novelist Salman Rushdie sing? (Yup.) Will Stace join in? (Frequently.) The show's backup band, the English UK, are kickin'. If you're at all like me, watching a performer pull off so many different tricks may just inspire you to get off your ass and try something new.

Chris Collingwood is a singer, songwriter, and cofounder of the rock group Fountains of Wayne. His new band, Look Park, released their eponymous debut in 2016. Follow him @lookpark

PHOTO: EBET ROBERTS


CIVIL RIGHTS SUSPENDED IN 8 STATES
ANOTHER SCHOOL SHOOTING KILLS CHILDREN
POLAR ICE CAPS NEARLY GONE
GLOBAL WARMING RISKS GROW
SHOOTER KILLS 62 AT AIRPORT
WORLD ON BRINK OF NUCLEAR WAR
ASSAULT RIFLE SALES UP 300%
CONFEDERATE FLAG NOW STATE FLAG
Todd Francis

"Drop your tools, boys... nobody gets anything this year."



MAN OF THE MOMENT

BEN SHAPIRO

CONSERVATIVE political commentator, author, columnist, radio talk show host, and lawyer Ben Shapiro is no dummy. The 33-year-old Los Angeles native graduated early from high school, achieved summa cum laude from the University of California, and holds a Harvard Law degree. He started writing his first book, *Brainwashed: How Universities Indoctrinate America's Youth,* when he was 17, and has published six books since. (What did *you* do during your twenties?)

From 2012 until spring 2016, Shapiro was editor-at-large of right-wing news outlet Breitbart News. But after Breitbart reporter Michelle Fields was manhandled by Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, Shapiro left Breitbart, disgusted by their lack of support for a colleague. By then he was already running his own politics site, The Daily Wire. Today, he is the host of The Ben Shapiro Show, the "largest conservative podcast in the nation," and runs his own legal consultation firm, Ben Shapiro Legal Consulting.

A whip-smart overachiever, Shapiro rose to heightened levels of political fame in 2017. Passionate in support of libertarian principles (free speech, personal responsibility, separation of powers, small government), the West Coast conservative has become an icon to many thinkers tired of being denounced by those who elevate feelings above facts.

In the Trump world, Shapiro attempts to aid his listeners in analyzing American politics with a critical perspective, often urging them to tune in to left-leaning podcasts, like Pod Save America, to get both sides of the picture and find "truth" in the synthesis of opposing news sources.

At this year's Politicon conference, Shapiro debated leftist talk show host Cenk Uygur of the Young Turks, and the joust went viral. Shapiro mopped the floor with the outspoken liberal. "The battle between the identity politics of the left and the identity politics of the so-called alt-right is what is making the country a significantly worse place," he said to a packed house at UC Berkeley in September. "It needs to stop now."

The radical left calls Shapiro a threat, a neo-Nazi, and a white supremacist "in servitude to Trump and Pence"—this despite the fact that he didn't vote for them (or Hillary Clinton).

His recent speech at Berkeley was so heavily protested it racked up $600K in security costs. A practicing and proud Orthodox Jew who criticizes the alt-right as much as he does the left and anti-fascists, Shapiro laughs at his protesters' cartoon image of him. As for Berkeley administrators offering counseling sessions to those who felt threatened by his visit, Shapiro told HLN, "Honestly, if you need counseling because I am speaking, then you need psychiatric care anyway."

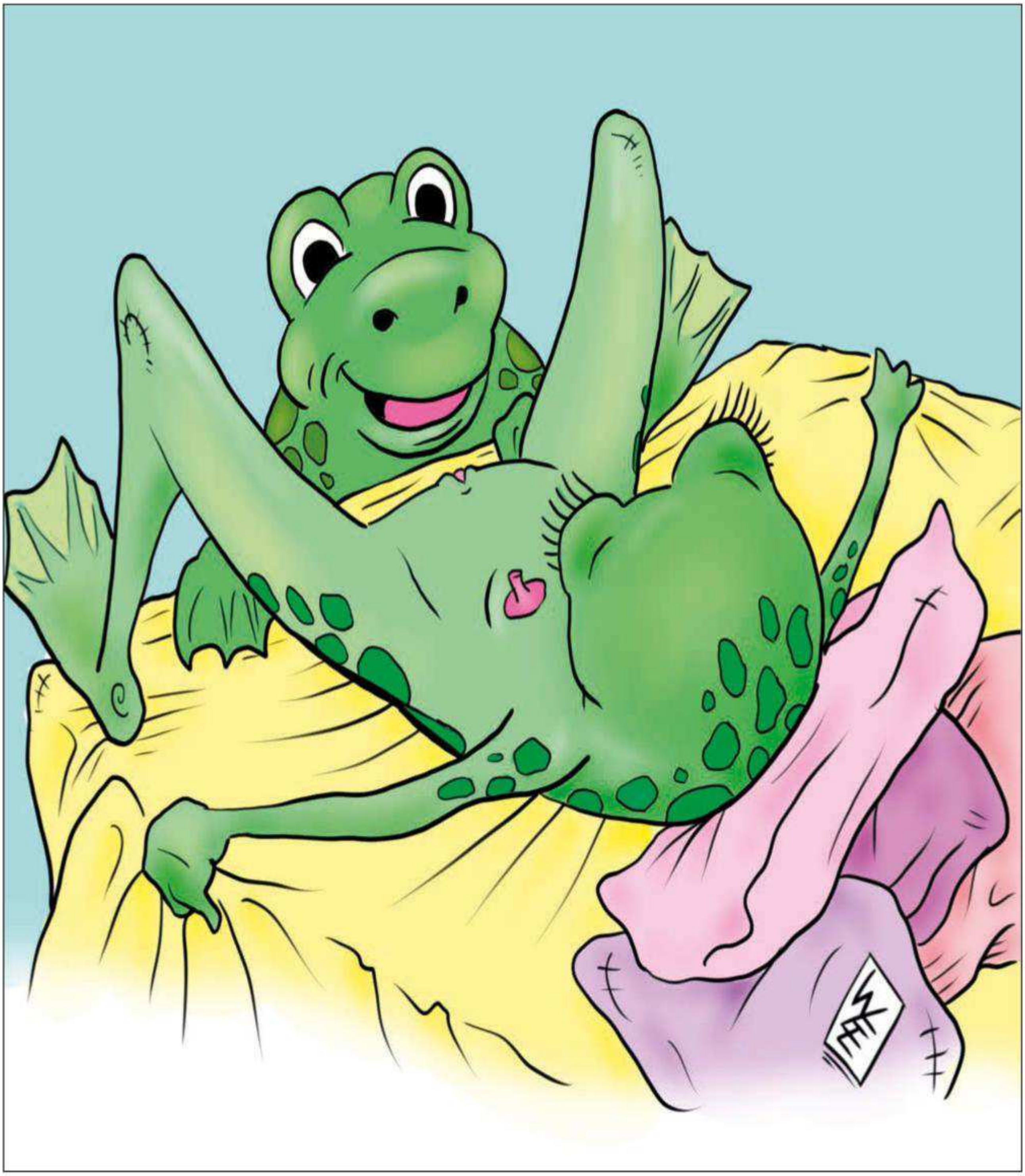
At Berkeley he called for less broad-brushing: "We have stopped seeing each other as individuals.... I am not a cardboard cutout for you to call a white supremacist. I am not a cardboard cutout for you to call a Nazi, and neither is anyone else in this room. Get to know people. Get to know their views. Discuss. Debate. That is what America is all about." Shapiro added, "We are in a dark moment right now. But I think we can get to a brighter moment if we stop seeing each other as members of groups."

Whether you love him or hate him, agree or vehemently disagree with his views on topics like abortion and immigration, Shapiro is having an impact on younger generations who simply want to debate political ideas again without being silenced. He champions critical thinking, individual freedom, and public discussion. And for that, we salute him.

Penthouse knows that Mr. Shapiro would not like being in our pages, but too bad. We are fans.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES / MICHAEL SCHWARTZ

EATING OUT ***By Warren E. Elliott***



“Mmm...tastes like chicken!”

BABEO BAGGINS, BANJO BABE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: CHRISTINA WILLIAMS

VIRGINIA-BORN Babeo Baggins may be young, but the 25-year-old songstress already has a full-blown music career. A few years back, she founded the all-girl rap outfit Barf Troop, which caught the attention of pop idols Drake and Ariana Grande, and now, trusty banjo in hand, she's minted a new take on country, fusing the Bible Belt honky-tonk she loves with a modern R&B twist. That may sound about as appealing as a peanut butter and tuna fish sandwich, but trust us, after one listen you'll be hooked.

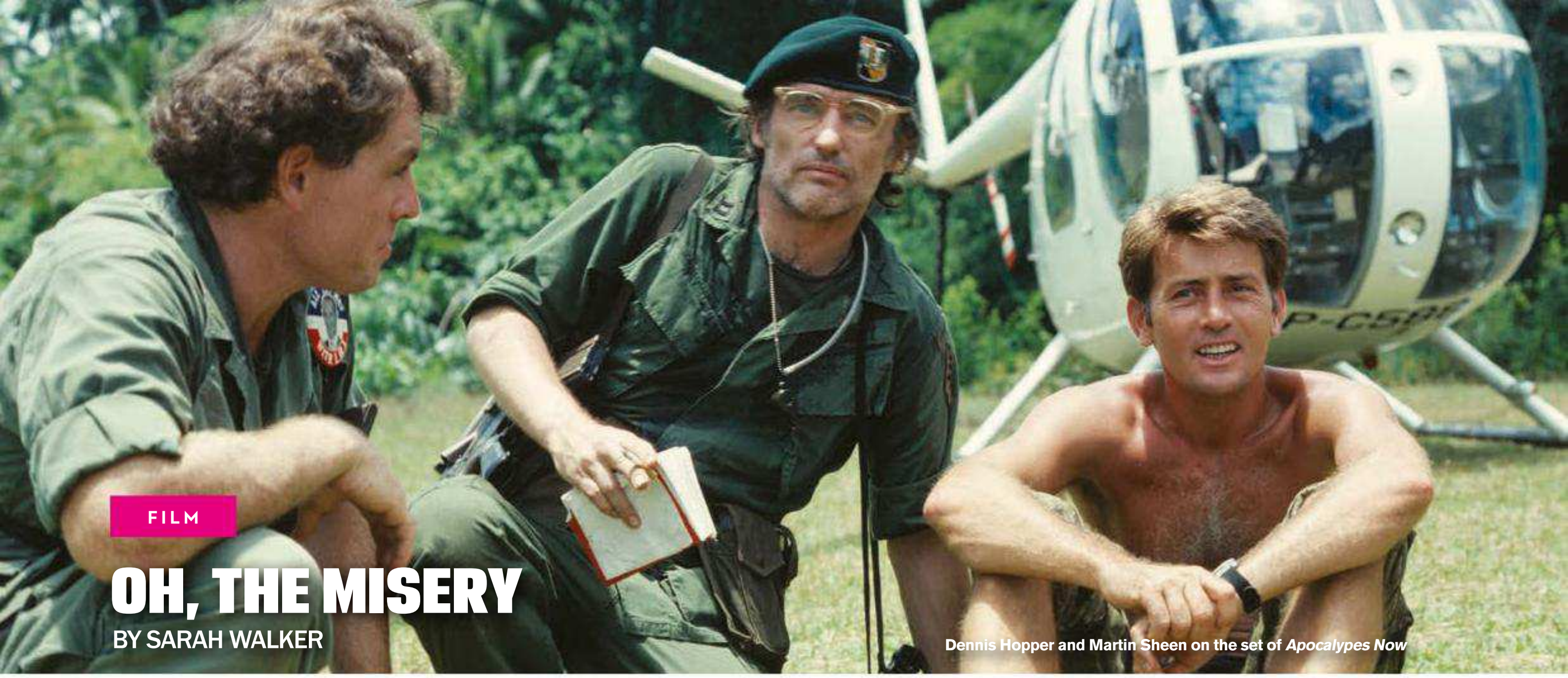
When did you start making music?
I've been making music all my life, but professionally, I started about four years ago with three of my best friends. It's been a long journey and I can't believe everything that's happened in that time span; it's almost unbelievable the world I've made for myself. I wouldn't change it for anything.

What do you love most about Virginia and how has it inspired your new musical direction?
I love everything about it, from the mountains, valleys, and rivers to the kindness of its people. Even when I've lived in different states, there has only ever been one "home" for me and it will always be the Shenandoah Valley. My home has taught me so much about myself and about how important honesty is in everything, and I think that more than anything is the inspiration behind my new project. I want my work to speak for me in the most honest and truthful way. There ain't nothing to hide behind where I'm from—everything is exactly what it is, and to me that's how it should be.

What's been your career highlight so far?
I think just having a career at all in the thing I love most has been the biggest highlight. I did all of this on my own with little to no outside help. I didn't know anything about making music or being in the music industry, and I had to learn some hard lessons, but I'm better for it. Besides that, playing banjo live for the first time was a big one.

Which artists inspire you?
As much as I love making music, I love listening to it even more. My biggest musical inspirations have to be Hank Williams and Young Thug. I know they are drastically different sonically, but when it comes to honesty in art, those two take the cake. Hank was the king of simple and honest songwriting—he was the lovesick cowboy! Unafraid to be. Young Thug is a complete artistic visionary. He's so true to himself and doesn't compromise himself for anyone. If I could be as honest as Hank Williams and as brave as Young Thug in my art, I think I'd be set.

Find more of Babeo Baggins on Spotify, Instagram, and Twitter: @babeobaggins



FILM

OH, THE MISERY

BY SARAH WALKER

Dennis Hopper and Martin Sheen on the set of *Apocalypses Now*

WHEN it comes to budget-busting movies, there are those that spend millions and bomb (yeah, we're talking about you *Waterworld* and *Heaven's Gate*) and others that, by some cinematic miracle, end up redeeming their spiraling costs and production nightmares.

Bride of Frankenstein **(1935)** Considered a masterpiece superior to its 1931 predecessor, this famous sequel was riddled with behind-the-scenes drama. Boris Karloff (the Monster) broke his hip on the first day of shooting; Colin Clive (Dr. Frankenstein) broke his leg and was drunk most of the time. The film's elaborate sets ratcheted up the budget—from $300K to $400K—as did the extensive costumes and makeup for Karloff and Elsa Lanchester, aka the "bride." Director James Whale, a notorious control freak, insisted on perfection in every scene, and was determined to have O. P. Heggie play the small role of the blind hermit, shutting down production for ten days to accommodate the actor's schedule. Karloff was paid $2,500 per week, a huge salary for that time, and the film was extensively re-edited, based on audiences' reactions in preview screenings. Thankfully it was all worthwhile; it's considered one of the greatest horror films of all time. And shock of all shockers: They're remaking it for 2019, with Javier Bardem as the Monster.

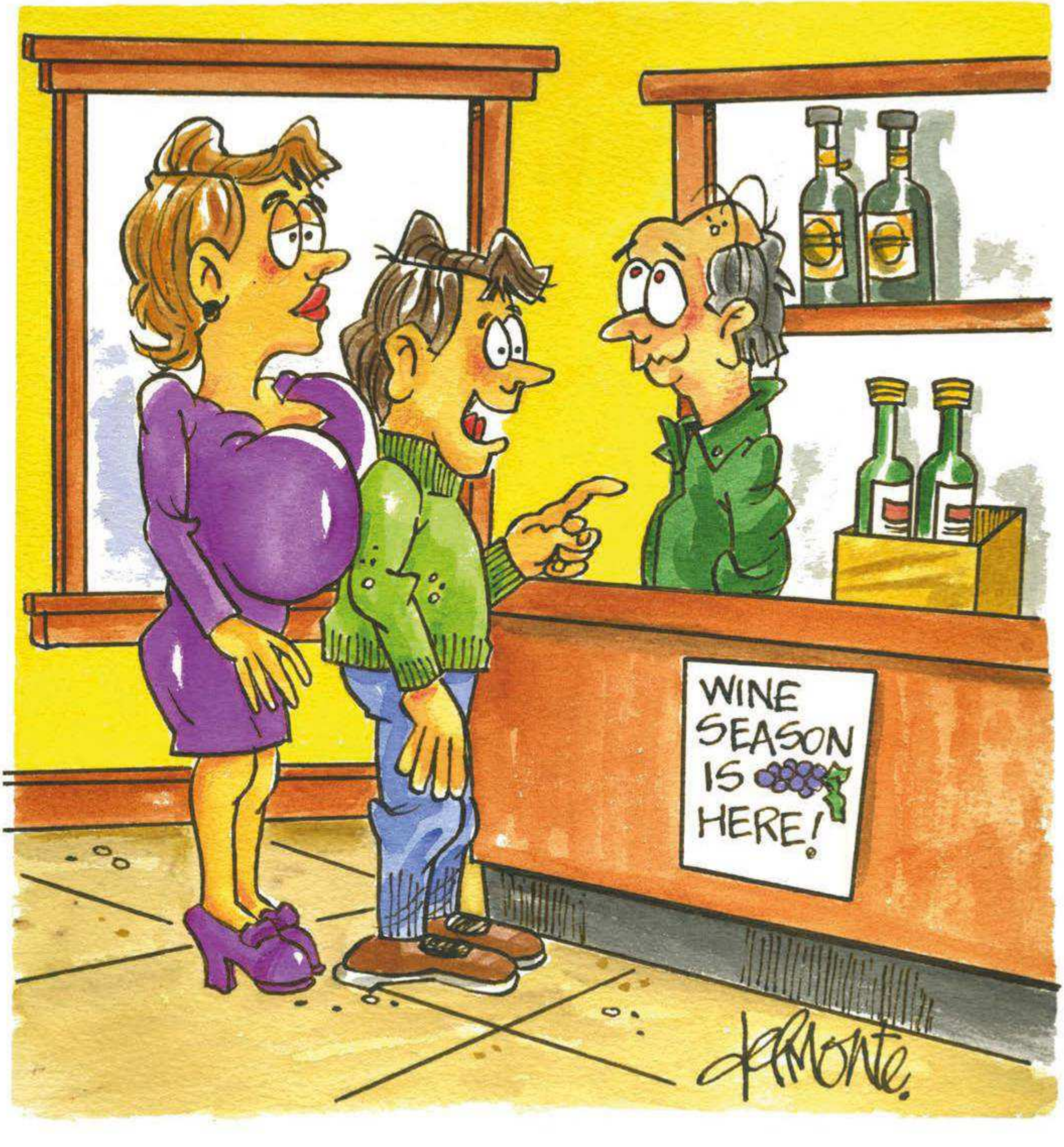
Jaws **(1975)** Even as a 27-year-old novice (*Jaws* was his second feature), Steven Spielberg was a hard-ass. For starters, he was adamant about shooting in open water. "I was too young to know I was being foolhardy when I demanded that we shoot the film in the Atlantic Ocean and not in a North Hollywood tank," he told *Entertainment Weekly* in 2011. There were frequent malfunctions of "Bruce," the three mechanical sharks, which began to deteriorate in the salt water (Spielberg nicknamed them the "great white turd"). The film's original budget was $3.5 million, but by the end of the 159-day shoot (stretched from 55 days) that number doubled. Remember Robert Shaw, who played the salty bastard Quint? PAs had to keep the notorious alcoholic from disappearing into bars during the shoot (the scene where Quint tells the *USS Indianapolis* story had to be shot twice because Shaw was too drunk the first time). Oh, and the boat they were on? The *Orca*? It really sank, along with all the film equipment on it.

Apocalypse Now **(1979)** With the release of Ken Burns's new PBS opus on Vietnam, it's a perfect time to revisit Francis Ford Coppola's brilliant war film, which was such a shitshow it nearly killed its star and bankrupted its director. The original budget was $14 million, but ballooned to $31 million ($30 mil of which was fronted by Coppola, and included valuations of his house and winery). From the get-go, the Philippines-based shoot was fucked: Typhoon Olga destroyed several huge sets the first month, in May 1976. The following March, 36-year-old Martin Sheen had a heart attack. (Sheen recovered, obviously, and was back at work three weeks later.) Marlon Brando demanded $3.5 million for his performance as Kurtz, a character with 15 minutes of screen time, then showed up unprepared and too fat to play the scenes written for him, requiring the ending be changed. Coppola shot an unprecedented 1.5 million feet of film, had an epileptic seizure, a mental breakdown, and allegedly threatened suicide three times during the shoot. Principle photography was scheduled to last six months, but took over a year, with editing taking an additional two years, requiring the work of four editors. The horror, the horror….

Fitzcarraldo **(1982)** Werner Herzog's insane drama starring German actor Klaus Kinski is worth seeing if only for the spectacle. Kinski plays a 19th-century capitalist who decides to drag a riverboat over a mountain, to tap an otherwise inaccessible part of the Amazon for rubber production. Herzog feared the audience could tell if the maneuver was fake, so he hauled a real 360-ton ship over a real mountain. The $6 million budget spiked to $14 million. *Burden of Dreams,* a film about the making of *Fitzcarraldo,* tells the story of the brutal shoot: First, there was a border war between Peru and Ecuador, forcing the crew to relocate 1,200 miles. Then Herzog shot the first half of the film with Jason Robards and Mick Jagger—until Robards contracted dysentery and Jagger dropped out. So the director called on his old friend Kinski—a real-life megalomaniac—to play the titular role. At one point the crew was driven out by hostile Indians, their sets and living quarters burned; two native workers were injured by spears shot from the rainforest; another crew member was bitten by a snake and saved his own life by chain-sawing off his poisoned foot.

Sarah Walker, a long-suffering Penthouse employee, was the Sundance correspondent for Fangoria magazine.

PHOTO BY © CATERINE MILINAIRE/SYGMA VIA GETTY IMAGES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Super NES Classic Edition (Nintendo)

THE NES Classic Edition—an itty-bitty reincarnation of the venerable eighties console upgraded to work on modern TVs—delivered more than just a nostalgic blast from gaming's past when it launched last year with 30 built-in games. It spawned a gold rush among gadget scalpers. Released in limited quantities for $60 and then discontinued, the system exploded in value, selling on eBay for a 500 percent markup. The lesson here was clear: Greybeard gamers are willing to spend almost anything for a clever approximation of the past.

And now history is repeating itself with the Super NES Classic Edition, just launched for $80. Like the NES Classic, it's a mini-model of the original, right down to the texture of its casing and grape-juice hue of its buttons, all designed to trigger five-alarm fuzzy feelings in Nintendo fanboys. A large part of the system's appeal is the authenticity of its two joypads, which replicate the contours, responsiveness, and extra-long cords of the original Super NES controllers. Wires aside, the system has a minimalist plug-and-play design; it connects to your display via HDMI and jacks into any USB port for power.

The 21 built-in games represent the pinnacle of 16-bit gaming, from the brooding atmosphere of *Super Metroid* to the crowd-pleasing competition of *Street Fighter II* to deep cuts like the cult RPG *Earthbound* and the never-released sequel to *Star Fox*. Every game is faithfully emulated down to the tight controls, graphical glitches, and occasional slowdown when the screen goes batshit with sprites. A new rewind feature lets you mulligan missed jumps and sudden deaths—a handy feature if you're unaccustomed to the extreme difficulty of games designed in the last millennium. It adds up the most authentic retro experience short of snagging the original Super NES and all these cartridges on eBay—probably a cheaper option than buying this hot mini-console from a reseller.

RETRO ACTIVE: FOUR ATTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE ELUSIVE SUPER NES CLASSIC

> 4 <

ATARI FLASHBACK 8 GOLD (ATGAMES, $80)

Like Nintendo's mini systems, the Flashback recreates its old-school inspiration (in this case, the Atari 2600) in loving detail, right down to the one-button joysticks and faux wood-grain finish. It includes 120 built-in games—including classics *Pitfall* and *Kaboom*—although most don't stand the test of time.

> 3 <

SEGA GENESIS FLASHBACK (ATGAMES, $60)

This plug-and-play HDMI-enabled system recreates the ancestral enemy of the Super NES in the 16-bit wars. Eighty-five built-in games—plus a working cartridge port for any actual Genesis cartridges you might find at garage sales—sell the old marketing slogan "Genesis does what Nintendon't."

AtGames
GENESIS
SEGA GENESIS FLASHBACK

> 2 <

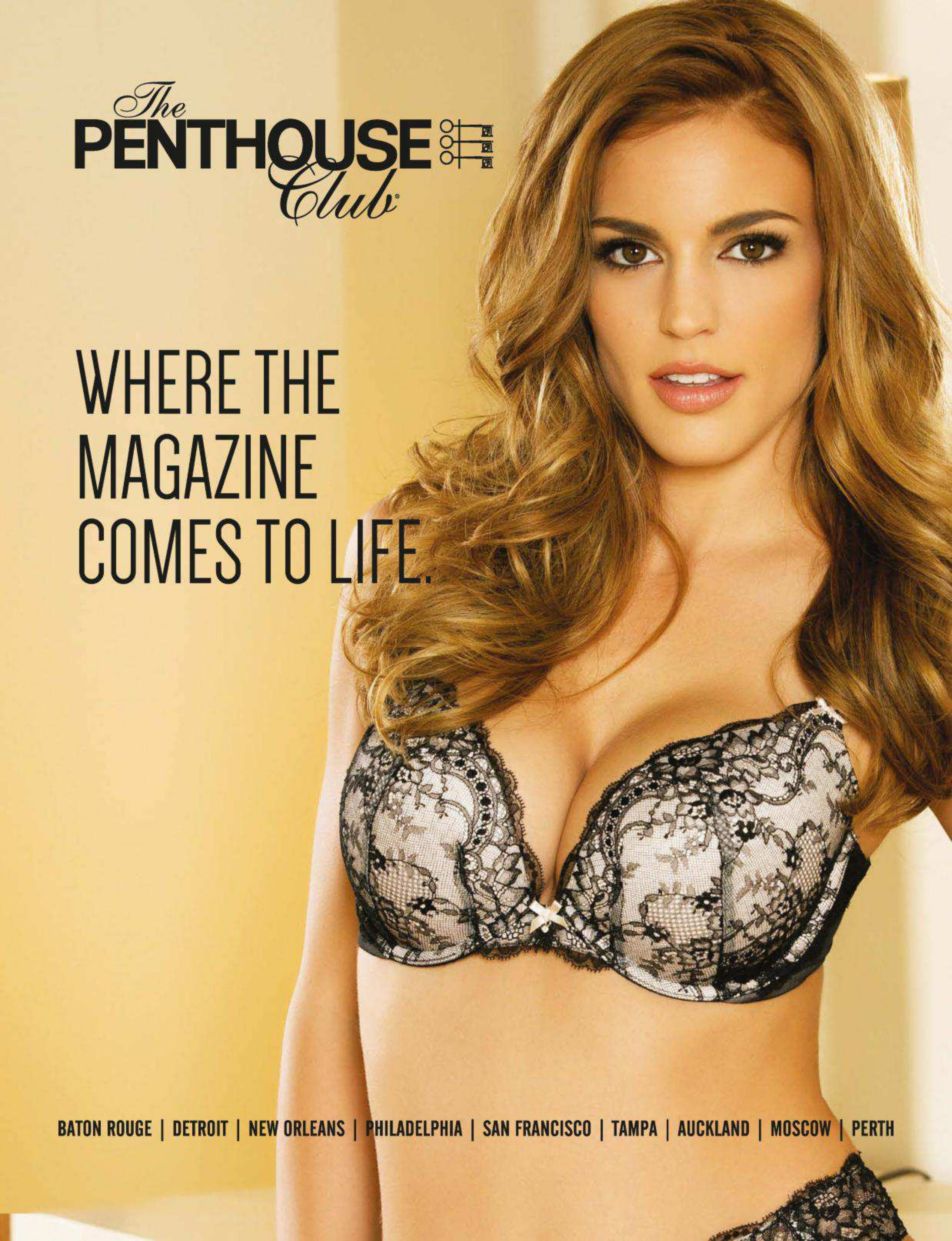
ICADE JR. (ION AUDIO, $50)

The flashy cabinet, the ball-topped joystick, the coin-op classics from days of yore—everything about this iPhone accessory is designed to evoke wistfulness in any gamer raised in the wilds of mall arcades. It links via Bluetooth to your iPhone, which slides through a hatch at the unit's top and serves as its game screen.

> 1 <

RETRON 5 (HYPERKIN, $140)

This pricey system doesn't feature built-in games like most retro-remake consoles, but it does upgrade your dusty old cartridges for the modern era. With cartridge slots for no less than ten systems—including most featured here—the RetroN adds HDTV resolution, saves, online play, and other twenty-first-century essentials.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MR. EIGHT-EIGHTY

THIS 1930s COUNTERFEITER HAD THE SECRET SERVICE STUMPED FOR NEARLY A DECADE.

BY MICHAEL HINGSTON

AS long as humans have traded cash for goods and services, there has been a smaller, sneakier subset of schemers in the background, deciding it'd be easier to fake the stuff than to work hard and long enough to earn it cleanly.

Counterfeiting is far from a dead trade. An estimated $220 million of fake money was in circulation in the U.S. in 2012. And counterfeiters continue to pop up in all shapes and sizes: Earlier this year, a library in Massachusetts reported a surge of people trying to pay their overdue fees with tokens from Chuck E. Cheese. (Hey, you can't knock the hustle.) But in the annals of counterfeiting, one of the weirdest stories in American history also happens to be one of its most infamous.

Back in the 1930s, the Secret Service spent an entire decade tearing its own hair out, trying to pin down the identity of a New York City man known only as "Mr. Eight-Eighty." The fact that this man eluded agents for so long is all the more impressive, considering he only ever counterfeited one-dollar bills.

Also, he was incredibly bad at it. We're talking didn't-know-how-to-spell-Washington levels of ineptitude.

After using his first phony bill at a cigar store in 1938, he was launched. But unlike most counterfeiters, Mr. Eight-Eighty—so nicknamed because that was the number on his file—never went to the same place twice. Nor was he in a rush to spend his fake bills; he only seemed to go through one or two each day. These factors, along with the fact that the $1 bill is so ubiquitous that most people don't look at them too closely, meant that the Secret Service had almost no leads to go on. In that first year, Mister Eight-Eighty successful distributed nearly 600 bills, and almost 3,000 in his first five. Some even slipped past the banks, recirculating to places as far away as Atlanta and Seattle.

Now, the Secret Service obviously had bigger fish to fry. But Mr. Eight-Eighty, frankly, drove them nuts. And no detail of the case was more infuriating than the sheer sloppiness of the counterfeiting itself. An internal memo about Mr. Eight-Eighty's work described the paper as "cheap," the portrait "poorly executed," the etching "faulty," and some of the letters "illegible," "misshaped," and "otherwise crudely outlined." Over time, the fake bills somehow got worse: Soon the Secret Service started coming across bills with George Washington's name actually misspelled, under the portrait, as "Wahsington." Still they couldn't catch him.

It wasn't until 1948, nearly a full decade later, that fate intervened, in the form of a fire on the top floor of a brownstone tenement on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. While putting out the blaze, firefighters threw the contents of the apartment—mostly junk, they figured—out the window into the vacant lot next door. That's where a group of neighborhood kids came across some printing plates and what they called "stage money," and which one of their dads later realized were actually counterfeit bills. When he reported the money to the Secret Service, however, the man couldn't believe how excited they were. "You'd have thought I was Dick Tracy calling in a hot tip to the chief," he said.

So, who was Mr. Eight-Eighty? As it turned out, he wasn't a mastermind. He wasn't even a career criminal. No, the man who kept the entire Secret Service on its heels for almost a decade turned out to be a toothless, elderly widower named Emerich Juettner (better known as Edward Mueller). A superintendent-turned-junkman, Mueller started counterfeiting in order to make ends meet after his wife died and his children moved out. He lived a simple lifestyle, and mostly used the fake cash to buy groceries and dog food.

When the Secret Service confronted him about all this, Mueller cheerfully admitted his crime right away. He was sentenced to a year and a day in prison, and ordered to pay a fine—of one dollar.

Michael Hingston is a writer based in Edmonton, Alberta. He was our Executive Editor's kindergarten boyfriend.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / RONSTIK

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LET'S TALK SEX

POLE POSITION

IS PICKING UP GIRLS IN A STRIP CLUB LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL? HARDLY. BY JOE CUTCLIFFE

IT'S their job to butter you up and strip your wallet of its hard-earned contents, so you can be forgiven for an automatic inclination to assume that when a stripper calls you "handsome" she's just hustling her crowd. But is there another side to the job? Can you genuinely find your audience attractive when you're getting paid to remove your clothes for them? We hit the town and spoke to some strippers to find out if guys really try to pick them up at work, and if they ever play along.

"Guys try it almost every night," we're told. "You'd think they'd probably realize we're not there to fuck them, but it doesn't stop them."

So, drunk dudes on a boy's night out behaving badly in front of nude women? No surprises there. But when we asked a few girls if they ever go home with a customer after they get off the pole, we did get some surprising, even encouraging, responses.

"I haven't, but a lot of my other stripper friends have," says Gina, who's in between sets at one of the city's classier venues. "Some more than others. One girl I used to dance with used to screw, like, one or two guys from the club a week. Another friend met her fiancé in a private show."

Who are these lucky guys, you ask, and what do you have to say to get across the line in a strip club? "I've only ever gone home with the sober ones," says Xenia. "You kind of forget where you are and what you're doing if you're having fun with a guest, but if he's sober and cute it's easy to just say 'fuck it' and let him buy you a drink and take it from there. It feels safer as well, I guess."

So, don't go too heavy on the naughty water–seems like legit advice. But what about what to say?

"The best line I've ever heard was from this one guy–he looked like Robin Thicke and was wearing this shiny suit and cowboy boots–I went up and asked if he'd like a private show and he just said, 'Wouldn't that make it awkward if our grandkids ever found out that I paid money to see you naked though?'" says Bobbi.

"And then there's what never to say," she continues. "That's one example of a cheesy line being great, but pickup lines generally aren't going to work on girls who are already naked, especially when they hear them all every day. Or involve direct reference to their dicks.

The worst I've probably heard is, 'There are 206 bones in the human body–want another?' And sometimes I swear if I have one more guy ask me if it hurt when I fell from heaven I'm going to put my clothes back on and walk out."

THINGS TO NEVER SAY TO A STRIPPER:

- Ease the cheese. Don't say anything obvious or clichéd. No, heaven isn't missing an angel, U and I aren't next to each other in the alphabet, and you can't have her phone number just because you lost yours.
- Avoid talking about your junk. You're trying to prove you're the nicest guy in the place, so arm yourself with the charm to match. Telling her you "need a home for your purple dome" isn't going to get you very far.
- If you do try to chat up someone who flirts for a living, don't pretend you can out-game them. "The sweetest guys I meet at work are the ones who aren't pretending to be George Clooney–genuine is always best," says Bobbi.

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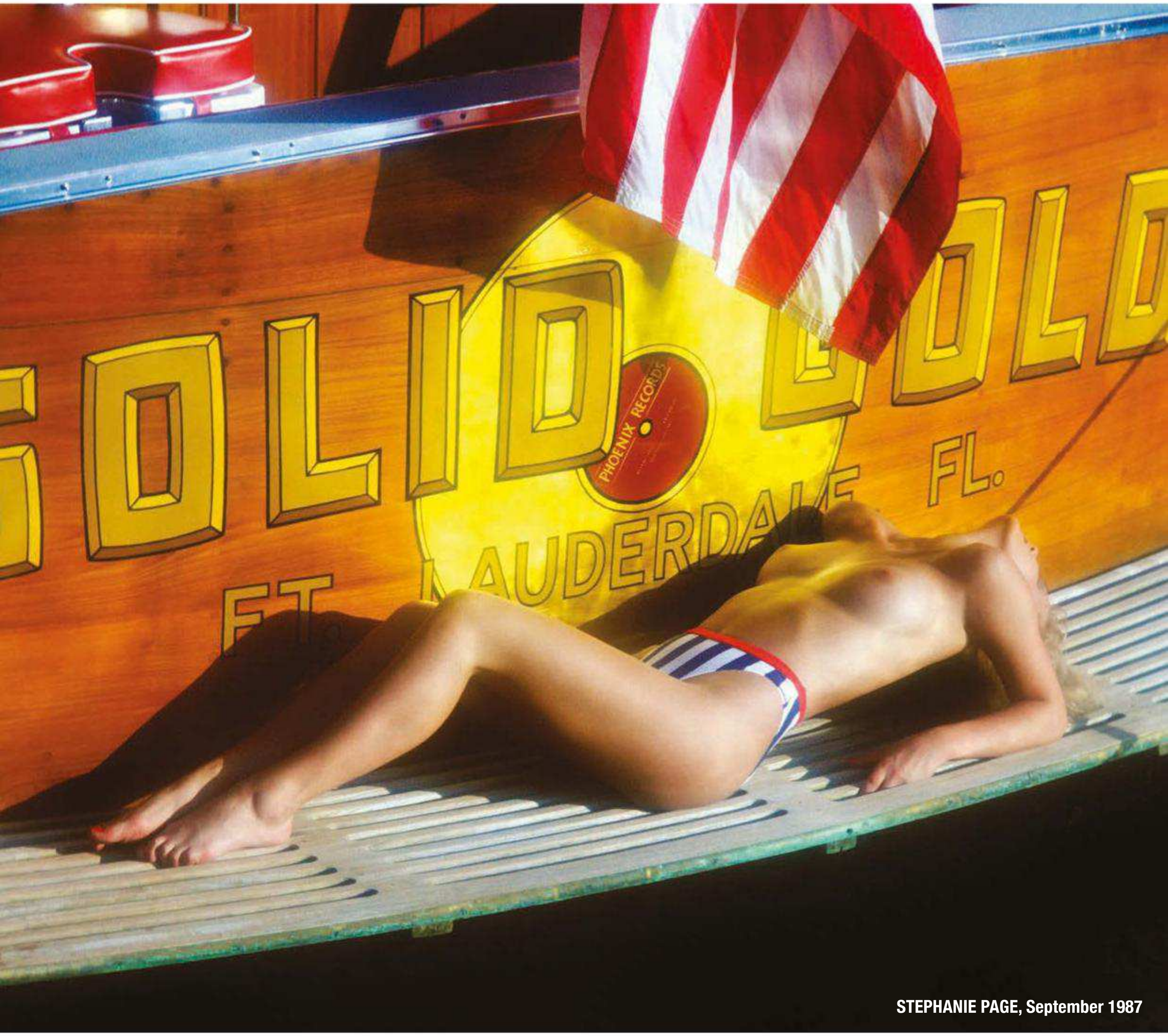

STEPHANIE PAGE, September 1987

LIFE ON TOP

The pearl necklace has always been a sign of elegance, wealth, and luxury. Furs, fancy cars, diamonds, and gold all say "rich bitch," but pearls are next-level class. Only the most fabulous women wore pearls, and the prudes of the bunch clutched theirs when someone uttered a dirty word. Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Grace Kelly, and Coco Chanel were devoted to their precious pearls. "A woman needs ropes and ropes of pearls," Chanel famously said. We couldn't agree more, Coco. We love a pearl necklace. Just not the kind you wear.

SARAH REMINGTON-GRAVES, January 1986

GINA, CHRISTY, AND DIANE, November 1991

JAQUELINE WINFIELD, April 1990

MAHALIA MARIA, January 1991

ANITA DARK & WANDA CURTIS, January 2006

PEACH, March 2005

A RISING STAR IN TEXAS: RENEWABLE ENERGY

HOW A STATE THAT CELEBRATES CLIMATE DENIAL AND FOSSIL FUELS BECAME A KEY BATTLEGROUND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING.

BY GEOFF DEMBICKI

THERE were at least two times during Hurricane Harvey when Brantley Hargrove wondered if his life was in danger.

The first time was when he stepped out of a Chevy 4x4 onto the deserted streets of Ingleside, Texas, and got pummeled by the strongest and scariest winds he had ever experienced. Hargrove is a Dallas-based journalist who's chased and written about tornados all over the American South. But this was his first hurricane. The friend who'd invited him to experience Harvey when it made landfall on the Gulf Coast, Ben McMillan, was doing a live spot for CNN. As Hargrove filmed McMillan on an iPad, gusts of wind slammed the truck like shock waves. He could see pieces of debris whiz past. "I was way outside my comfort zone," Hargrove recalls.

The second time came after the two of them got back inside the Chevy and decided to wait out the storm behind the concrete wall of a Pizza Hut and Snappy gas station. By now, rain was falling so hard Hargrove could only see a smear of gray across their windshield. The wind wailed, hissed, and roared. It tore pieces of aluminum siding off the roof and flung them across the parking lot. He tried not to think about the entire roof collapsing on their truck. "Thankfully, that did not happen," says Hargrove.

The next morning, he and McMillan drove to Rockport, a town of 10,000 people just up the coast from Ingleside. They saw power poles scattered along the highway like matchsticks. Trailer homes torn apart and flipped over. Some parts of Rockport were almost fully submerged in water. "It looked like we were in a boat," the journalist remembers.

Across Texas, 18 counties were declared federal disaster zones, an area larger than Massachusetts and Connecticut combined. The area of Cedar Bayou broke the record for most rainfall in the continental U.S.—52 inches in five days, more than Atlanta gets in a year. Harvey killed dozens of people and displaced over a million. "This event is unprecedented," the National Weather Service concluded.

Yet disasters like this are becoming more common. Harvey is described as a 500-year flood, a storm of such intensity that it has only a 1-in-500 chance of happening each year. The storms that walloped Houston in 2015 and 2016 were also considered 500-year floods.

It's true that hurricanes have pounded the Gulf Coast for as long as anyone can remember. But the warmer waters and increasing moisture caused by rising global temperatures are making storms such as Harvey much more destructive. Climate change "greatly increased the risk of damage and loss of life," wrote Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann. But whether state and federal leaders from Texas accept that conclusion is another question entirely.

When Republican governor Greg Abbott ran for office in 2014, he dismissed the link between oil and gas production in places like Texas and climate change, saying, "This matter needs to continue to be investigated." He'd previously sued the federal government to prevent new greenhouse-gas legislation. In Harvey's aftermath, Abbott's office ignored questions from the *Guardian* about the role that climate change played in the disaster. So did the state's 38 Republican members of Congress when the *Washington Post* made a similar request.

"I don't see Harvey as any kind of wake-up call for our political leadership here in Texas," Hargrove remarks.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / PHOTOMONTAGE

But progress on climate change can come in many forms. Whether or not political leaders like Abbott acknowledge the basic science is only one piece of a much larger story.

■■■

OVER the last decade, Texas has quietly become one of America's biggest producers of clean energy. The wind, solar, and energy-efficiency industries employ more than 180,000 people across the state. In 2014, they generated $7.8 billion in revenue. Wind alone has attracted $33 billion in capital investment. Those are some of the reasons why CBS News recently declared, "The future of renewable energy is in Texas."

Yet the future isn't coming peacefully. Renewables have grown so fast they're starting to hurt the business model of oil, gas, and coal. Some fossil-fuel companies are adapting to the new economic reality. But others within the industry are hostile toward it. They believe that renewables are "getting too big and threatening their ability to profit," says Tom "Smitty" Smith, executive director of the Texas office of Public Citizen, an environmental watchdog group. These fossil-fuel companies and their incumbent allies are fighting to preserve the status quo. They have won big legislative victories in recent years. But they've also suffered surprising defeats.

Penthouse learned in interviews with key players across the state that this ongoing battle has almost nothing to do with climate change or the threat of hurricanes even more destructive than Harvey. It's being entirely driven by money. Yet the outcome may yield gigantic environmental benefits for Texas and the entire planet. When I ask Hargrove how this is remotely possible in a state whose leadership refuses to admit that climate change is a problem, he chuckles. "[Texas] can be tricked into doing what is in its best interest," he says, "if it makes sense financially."

Few people know that better than Annise Parker. The former mayor of Houston defies simple political stereotypes about Texas. She was the first openly gay leader of a major U.S. city. And during her time in office, from 2010 to 2016, Parker set a goal of transforming America's oil and gas capital into a global leader in the fight against climate change. She sold her vision to Houston in the neutral language of business. "Every time I have a conversation with residents about why the city needs to be greener, I talk about the bottom line," she explained to BBC News in 2015.

Thus, a city plan to replace old streetlights with energy-efficient LED bulbs became an opportunity to save Houston taxpayers $3 million a year. Parker used the same financial logic to convince big grocers like Walmart to send their methane-spewing food waste to composting facilities instead of local landfills. She also invested $192 million in new public transit. These were small steps for one of the most sprawling cities in the U.S., but they added up. City government emissions fell 38 percent from 2007 to 2015. The green magazine *onEarth* called it "nothing short of astounding."

I reached Parker on her cellphone about a week after Harvey struck. She was helping run the largest emergency shelter in Houston. It had so far taken in over 6,000 people. Parker wasn't doing much thinking about climate change. "I'm dealing with people who lost everything they have," she said. "We're not having a lot of conversations about what caused the storm." Yet she was happy to talk about her climate legacy.

During Parker's two terms as mayor she looked for any opportunity to transition the city away from fossil fuels. "As

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / SARAH FIELDS PHOTOGRAPHY

TEXAS WIND CAPACITY EXPLODED FROM 1,992 MEGAWATTS IN 2005 TO 20,321 MEGAWATTS IN 2016. WITH IT CAME PROFITS, ESPECIALLY FOR DEPRESSED RURAL AREAS.

long-term [electricity] contracts expired," she told me, "we shifted over to renewables, primarily wind." And as a result of her administration's efforts, Houston became the largest municipal purchaser of clean energy in America. It's no longer "just the capital of oil and gas," she said.

But this shift is bigger than Houston. And oddly enough, it began with a political leader who denies that humans are the main cause of climate change: Rick Perry, Republican governor of Texas from 2000 to 2015, and now Secretary of Energy in the Trump administration.

Back in 2005, Perry signed legislation to build thousands of miles of transmission lines from the windy western plains of Texas to cities like Houston, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. Without this massive $7 billion infrastructure project, "we would not be where we are today," Jay Root, a reporter for the *Texas Tribune,* said earlier this year. "I don't think anyone would call Rick Perry an environmentalist…. But the guy knows how to sniff out a dollar. Here's a guy from West Texas who saw that you can make money off of the wind blowing."

The impact was dramatic. State wind capacity exploded from 1,992 megawatts in 2005 to 20,321 megawatts in 2016. With it came profits, especially for depressed rural areas. The isolated town of Sweetwater now has four of the world's biggest wind farms and a tax base billions of dollars higher than a decade ago. The average Texas rancher gets $10,000 per year for each turbine they allow on their land. And across the state, wind turbines generated revenues of $2.3 billion in 2014 alone.

Wind is also having a big impact on emissions. Texas is the worst contributor to climate change of any U.S. state and much of that is due to fossil fuels. Oil refineries spewed 15 percent of the state's carbon in 2012, the EPA calculated. But the largest polluter is coal. Coal accounts for nearly two-thirds of the Texas carbon footprint.

The good news for climate change is renewables are rapidly stealing market share from coal. Wind now generates 15 percent of the state's electricity. And if renewables keep growing at today's rates, along with increases in natural gas, coal may fall to 8 percent of Texas's energy by 2035, according to a study from the Brattle Group. That would be massive. It would be like removing 13 million cars from Texas roads.

But not everyone in Texas is thrilled with the explosive growth in renewables. In 2015, Republican senator Troy Fraser sponsored a bill intended to slow the industry down. His bill directed Texas to stop building new transmission lines and revoke other supportive policies. Fraser, ironically, had originally helped write some of those policies. But, as he told the *Dallas Morning News,* "We set out to incentivize and get wind started in Texas, and we far surpassed that goal. There's no state that's come close to what we've done." He claimed that he now wanted to end millions of dollars of state subsidies toward renewable energy that were no longer needed.

Groups like Public Citizen argued Fraser's true intent was to protect fossil fuels. Growth in wind made it harder for natural-gas companies to profit from "energy shortages on the hottest days in the summer or late at night," argued Public Citizen's Smith. "They were looking at ways to force people back into a reliance on natural-gas power plants." The bill's supporters included Calpine, a leading U.S. natural-gas operator, as well as the Texas Public Policy Foundation, an Austin-based right-wing think tank that has received funding from companies such as Koch Industries and Exxon Mobil. (The Foundation didn't respond to my request for an interview.)

At first it seemed like Fraser's bill would pass. The legislation sailed through the Texas Senate. But in the House it experienced a "dramatic change in fortune," the *Dallas Morning News* reported. Legislators were bombarded by phone calls from areas of the state with large numbers of turbines. They also heard outcries from large businesses and municipal governments that were benefitting from low-cost wind energy. Republican legislator Drew Darby said he was "skeptical" about the bill's economic benefits. And after languishing in the House for six weeks it was declared dead. Renewables, Smith concluded, "beat the oil and gas industry."

TESLA HAD CLEARLY UNDERESTIMATED THE POLITICAL MUSCLE OF AUTO DEALERS–AS WELL AS THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP MARKET SHARE TO AN OUT-OF-STATE COMPETITOR.

■■■

BUT fossil-fuel incumbents continue to win important victories, especially in the ongoing battle over electric vehicles.

Texas is a massive potential market for this technology. Its cities are among America's most sprawling. Dallas tops the list for car-dependency in the U.S., and during Houston's rush hour 2.4 million vehicles crawl along 14 major expressways. Over in California there are a quarter-million electric vehicles on the road. Yet Texas, which has a comparable population, has under 17,000. The site CleanTechnica has described the number as "anemic."

That's not for lack of trying. For years, the electric-vehicle maker Tesla has been fighting to enter the Texas market. But it keeps running up against a law devised to protect the market monopoly of auto dealers. The law states that any vehicle sold in Texas must go through a licensed dealership franchise. That may not sound like too much of an issue, but to Tesla it's a deal-breaker. The company wants to sell its cars directly at Tesla storefronts. And it argues traditional auto dealerships are unlikely to push new vehicles aimed at making gas-powered cars obsolete. "We'd be at the back of the bus. It's a matter of life or death," Tesla CEO Elon Musk has claimed.

In 2012, Tesla tried to change the law. It sent lobbyists to Austin, hosted House Appropriations chair Jim Pitts in Santa Monica, and made a few modest campaign contributions. It was a complete failure. Neither the House nor Senate agreed to hold votes in the 2013 legislative sessions on repealing the dealership law.

Tesla had clearly underestimated the political muscle of auto dealers—as well as their unwillingness to give up market share to an out-of-state competitor. As Smith from Public Citizen explains: "Every member of the legislature has auto dealers in their district and they have been some of the most politically powerful people in the Texas legislature." In total, dealer companies such as Gulf States Toyota spent $2.5 million on the 2012 state elections. Musk's political contribution was $10,500.

But Musk was determined to not repeat that mistake. During the 2015 legislative session, Tesla paid $1.3 million to 22 lobbyists, more than triple what it'd spent two years earlier, according to the watchdog group Texans for Public Justice. Musk himself gave $150K in political contributions. Yet auto dealers still outspent him by a margin of 40:1. And Texas legislators once again declined to vote on changing laws in favor of Tesla. They didn't want to "piss off all the auto dealers," Senator Fraser explained to the *Texas Tribune* at the time. "I said, 'Do y'all want to have a Tesla hearing?' And they go, 'No, absolutely not. The bill's not going to pass.'"

Tesla tried again in 2017. It had reason to think that this time it might actually succeed. Almost 90 percent of delegates at the GOP state convention had voted in favor of language supporting changes to the dealership law. But it wasn't enough. Legislators struck down Tesla a third time. To groups such as Texans for Public Justice, these failures are evidence of a structural power imbalance. "Tesla needs broad support against entrenched interests to prevail," it argued. "All car dealers need to win is for somebody to quietly sabotage the legislative spark plugs in the middle of the night." On electric vehicles, vested interests continue to prevail.

■■■

IN other arenas, however, fossil fuels are looking less secure every day. People such as Jeffery Wolfe think the next big challenge to their market dominance in Texas will come from the sun. Within five years, he has predicted, "Texas will be the largest solar market in the U.S."

Wolfe has been involved with solar since its earliest days. He first became fascinated with the technology during the 1973 OPEC oil embargo. "I felt like there was a better way to do energy," he says. Two and half decades later, he and his wife Dori decided to give it a shot. They started a solar company out of their home in Vermont in 1998. Back then, solar was too expensive for most people to afford. But the costs have dropped between 6 and 12 percent each year since.

By 2010, Wolfe and his wife were running a national company called groSolar with $60 million in annual sales and 160 employees. They ended up selling it in 2016 and now live in Houston. But the industry they helped kick-start continues to expand at record rates. More solar was installed across the U.S. in 2016 than any other energy source. It employs more than 260,000 people and has transformed energy markets in states like Hawaii, California, Arizona, and Georgia. But this boom is yet to be felt in any serious way in Texas. So little solar was generated there in 2015 that the grid operator ERCOT didn't even include it in its annual report on Texas energy supply.

There's a relatively simple explanation why. Texas lacks statewide support for solar—and in particular, it has yet to embrace a policy known as net-metering, which has been adopted by over 40 other states. Net-metering makes solar even cheaper than it currently is by letting people and businesses with solar panels sell energy they aren't using back to the electric grid. But, as Smith says, "If more and more people start putting solar on their rooftops, then the electric utility industry loses revenue." For this reason, he contends, Texas utilities are "dead-set" against net-metering: "[They] helped kill a series of bills back in the mid-2000s that would have encouraged rooftop solar."

Yet utilities may have been merely delaying the inevitable. Solar technology is improving so fast that "the price of a home solar system will probably drop in half somewhere in the next two to five years," Wolfe observes. It could mean mass adoption in Texas even without net-metering. If you think that's too optimistic, consider that ERCOT, the grid operator, predicts all but 10 percent or so of coal use in Texas will be replaced by solar plants by 2031. Others, like Citigroup, argue solar will become so inexpensive it will outcompete natural gas as well. "When I started in 1998," says Wolfe, "I never dreamed solar would be the cheapest energy source in America."

This isn't likely to be a diplomatic transition. In other jurisdictions where solar has shown signs of exploding—places such as Florida, Nevada, and Arizona—fossil-fuel-burning utilities and groups funded by oil and gas companies like Koch Industries "are mounting a fierce, rear-guard resistance at the state level—pushing rate hikes and punishing fees for homeowners who turn to solar power," according to a 2016 *Rolling Stone* investigation. Wolfe predicts a similar scenario for Texas. "The fossil industry will use their muscles to create problems, obstructions, cost impacts, and restrictions, as they have in every other solar state," he argued in a 2016 speech.

This battle has very little to do with the actual science of climate change. In reality it's about a new and disruptive

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / ROSCHETZKY PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / SASA KADRIJEVIC

industry fighting for market share—and an ossified incumbent doing anything it can to stay alive. "I know people who don't believe in climate change but invest in solar because it's a moneymaker," Wolfe says. That is why he's hopeful the worst impacts of climate change can still be averted, despite a constant stream of news suggesting otherwise. The economics of clean energy are too compelling. "We have more opportunity to solve the problem than most people are aware," he notes. "And boy, there's a ton of money to be made in the transition."

■■■

THERE'S also a ton of money to be lost in delaying it. Natural disasters such as Hurricane Harvey are getting more expensive all the time. They demolish homes, flood warehouses, destroy crops, and ruin vehicles. Harvey's repair bill could top $190 billion, making it the costliest disaster in U.S. history. Hurricane Katrina, for comparison, cost $62 billion.

In the days after the storm, as millions of people in Texas began rebuilding their lives, the *Houston Chronicle* ran prominent pieces urging people to think long and hard about Harvey's larger context. "We have to begin to have an honest, civil conversation about climate change," argued one such article.

Houston mayor Sylvester Turner is trying. "For too long, Houston has seen the devastating impacts of climate change, from severe flooding to historic droughts," Turner stated several months before Harvey struck. "But Houston is resilient and our city is working harder than ever to build a sustainable economy." And when Donald Trump officially withdrew the U.S. from the Paris climate accord, Turner issued a clear-cut response: "We must not let the president's decision today slow our efforts."

There's a $16 billion industry in Texas fighting to ensure a cleaner energy future. That's the estimated value of the state's low-carbon economy, according to a 2015 report prepared by Navigant Research. The clean-energy companies included in the figure are getting too big for fossil-fuel incumbents to overlook. Some oil and gas majors, including BP Exxon, Shell, and Total, are making cautious investments in renewables.

The energy research firm Wood Mackenzie predicts over the coming decades oil companies will shift $1 for every $5 they now spend on drilling to wind and solar. "The growth opportunity in renewables cannot be ignored," the firm's Tom Ellacott has said.

Yet climate-fighting businesses now exploding across Texas are not waiting around. They're taking on fossil-fuel companies, stealing their market share, and threatening them with eventual extinction. Oil, gas, and coal still reign supreme in Texas. But, as we've seen in recent legislative battles, their attempts to obstruct new renewable energy challengers are becoming less effective all the time. And the larger trend lines are clear, even to people who deny the science of climate change: Wind, solar, and the industries associated with them are ascendant. Fossil fuels are not.

"If that's the future for Texas," Smith has concluded, "that's the future for the United States."

Geoff Dembicki is a freelance writer based in Vancouver, Canada. He is author of Are We Screwed? How a New Generation is Fighting to Survive Climate Change.

THE WOLF OF WEED STREET

INFAMOUS TRADER JASON SPATAFORA TELLS US HOW HE GOT RICH PLAYING PENNY POT STOCKS.

INTERVIEW BY MISH BARBER-WAY

FLORIDA-based stock trader Jason Spatafora became the Wolf of Weed Street in August of 2013. "I can pinpoint the exact day," he tells me. "It was when former attorney general Eric Holder announced that the Department of Justice wouldn't interfere with Colorado and Washington's legal marijuana market." Spatafora had already been trading, sinking his money into renewable energy, 3D printing, and cloud computing—"all the fads," as he puts it. "Then, I found pot stocks."

Spatafora has always lived by a progressive investment strategy: What will the world need in ten years? As legislation surrounding cannabis began to change in states like Colorado, California, and Washington, he became curious about the investment opportunities. He took a chance. "I had never invested in a penny stock in my life," the former CEO of FBEC Worldwide Inc. recalls. "I put in $500 and two days later the stock had gone up by 50 percent. It was wild. Two days after that, it tanked."

Despite the loss, Spatafora saw a future and was hooked. He began playing with penny pot stocks, making gains that shocked many of his contemporaries. He started a Twitter page to talk pot stocks (@WolfOfWeedST) and began tweeting out whatever the fuck came into his head as he studied the market. He built a following, and *Rolling Stone, Men's Journal,* and the BBC covered him. He later bought marijuanastocks.com, and today it's the most highly trafficked portal for cannabis investment education, posting daily articles, advice, and trade tips. He kind of kills the whole greedy-rotten-stock-broker stereotype. "It feels good to teach someone to fish," the trader says. "My followers are what made me. If I turned my back on them, I would be a shithead."

Although Spatafora made millions investing in penny stocks, he always reminds his followers that this requires research, diligence, and an eagle-eyed obsessiveness for watching the daily ebbs and flows of the market. "The stock market is not a magic ATM where you put money in and more money comes out," he says. If it was, we'd all be filthy rich. Here's more of my conversation with the Weed Street Wolf.

Where do I even start when investing in cannabis stocks?
Don't put in what you are afraid to lose. Don't gamble with your rent money or mortgage. [The cannabis] sector is so young. We are only getting through the first inning. Whenever I talk to people, I ask how many of them invested in real estate before 2004. Then I ask how many people they think invested in alcohol after Prohibition ended in 1934. Crickets. Cannabis is a once-in-a-lifetime investment opportunity and if you are smart about it, you can do very well. If you are gambling, and not being responsible or diligent, you will sour really quick.

Local and federal legislation must be a huge factor.
Of course. Know the laws! You also have to remember that investing in the cannabis industry is different in the United States than in Canada. We don't know what's going to happen in the U.S. The political climate right now is too nuts. Canada, on the other hand, is a legal medical market that is looking to go fully recreational. A lot of these [Canadian cannabis] companies are dually listed on both Canadian and U.S. stock exchanges.

Any Canadian companies you're excited about?
What really has me excited is that there are many big-pharma executives who are leaving that industry to move into cannabis. A company I'm really excited about is Emblem. One of the founders is John Stewart, former CEO of Purdue Pharma, one of the largest privately owned pharmaceutical companies in the world. Purdue created OxyContin, MS Contin, and Biphentin, among many other drugs. Stewart started studying cannabis and left Purdue knowing that weed would be the future. Emblem could become Canada's GW Pharma. When you're investing in companies like this, you have to bet on the jockey, not the horse. When I see a CEO with an incredibly successful track record like Stewart leave his cushy job in big pharma to work in cannabis, that tells me something big. Come on. I see Emblem as a no-brainer.

It's a Schedule 1 drug in the U.S. and the government owns the patents to medical cannabis. Should that worry me?
Look at investing in Canadian cannabis companies as long-term investing. "Long-term" in Canada could mean four years. I have 2,500 shares of my IRA in Emblem. I feel safe with that. Look, I think that with the consensus shifting [about cannabis] and because it's still so early in the game, you do not need to invest

Weed Street Wolf, Jason Spatafora

right away. You should stay aware and keep learning, then jump in when you're ready. People always say to me, "I have $10,000, what should I invest in?" I am never going to tell someone what to invest in. I suggest that you practice with fake money. Pick some companies, write down your investments, and watch the stocks. Fake-trade them for a month. Make mistakes with play money before you start investing real cash. I've seen people do the dumbest things. I had a friend who was up a million dollars on a pot stock. I told him to sell. He thought it would keep going up, and he ended up wrong. Can you imagine?

Losing that much money in an instant? Hell, no!

It's happened to me. I put $4,000 into a stock once, a million shares at half a penny, and in three months the stock rose to 45 cents. I asked a lawyer friend of mine out to lunch that day, and I was checking my stock throughout the meal. It was staying put. It was all good. Then, all of a sudden, my phone starts going off with alerts. The stock dropped 20 cents. I lost $200,000 because I wasn't paying attention. I'm not right all the time. I've made mistakes and bad predictions. If I was right all the time, I would be worth billions, not millions. I just need to be right more than I'm wrong. It's all about mitigating risk. If I can make $2,000 a week trading, then I'm happy. That's just gravy.

Tips for people interested in investing in cannabis stocks?

You have to know the laws that vertical is tied to. What that means is that if they are growing weed in a certain state, know the restrictions of that state. How hard is it for this [company's] product to go to market? What is the company's plan for merging their product out of state? You must know the legalities and compliance issues that surround that. The first thing you should always do is use Google. I would always type in the CEO's name and write "scam" or "fraud" after it. See what comes up. Check when the LLC started. Call up dispensaries and ask if they carry the product. Do some guerrilla investigation. That's how I started. I found some of the biggest companies who created those massive gains for me. Lastly, you can't be greedy. You see your stock go up 30 percent? Take it. I'm not saying take it all, but take the principle. Remember, there is always going to be another company. The more you're used to taking profits, the easier it will be. No one goes broke taking profits.

Interesting.

People love drinking the Kool-Aid. They love to think that they just invested in the new Amazon. The reality is that 99 percent of these companies are going to fail. If you're investing in the United States [cannabis industry] you should be looking at companies that offer support to the cannabis industry, not companies that are trying to have a grow if they ever get a license in their state. The best companies to invest in would be ones that make things such as LED lights, the bags the weed goes into, or nutrients required for growing. Scotts Miracle-Gro went from $65 a share to $90, all because they teamed up with a company that worked with hydroponics.

Another rule: People think they make money when they sell, but realistically, you make money when you buy. Don't chase a stock. As soon as you hear about a stock, don't buy it because you are buying someone else's shares. Wait. Next rule: If you go down 10 to 15 percent, get rid of it. Thinking it will go back up is probably wrong. You'll get killed. You have to preserve your capital. The name of the game is mitigating risk.

Mish Barber-Way is the smartest dumb blonde ever. (That is why she is our Executive Editor.)

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER HEDLUND @CHRISHEADSHOTS

THE DAY BROWN UNIVERSITY OUTLAWED SEX

BY ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

BROWN University, one of the leading schools that purports to educate our future leaders, recently declared that consensual sexual encounters between students are impermissible under university rules unless both parties consent.

Fair enough, but here's the rub. A training video discussing sexual consent for incoming students defines the operative word as follows: "Consent is knowing my partner wants me just as much as I want them."

Two of my former colleagues at Harvard Law School, the wife-husband team of professors Jeannie Suk and Jacob Gersen, are quoted in an excellent article in *The Atlantic* by Emily Yoffe as concluding that the impossible consent rules, such as the one at Brown, "plausibly cover...almost all sex students are having today."

That is why so many of my friends are urging their college-age sons to refrain from having any sex on or off campus with college-age women, who have been empowered by "the Sex Bureaucracy" to destroy the lives, education, and careers of any male student with whom they had an imperfect sexual experience.

"Next-morning regret" is a common phenomenon, especially in the current hookup culture facilitated by Tinder and fueled by alcohol.

The current criteria for what constitutes "consent" has turned "no means no" on its head. Even if a woman says "yes," the rule is now that "assent does not constitute consent" if the woman is under the influence of alcohol. But many college-age students want to have sex while under the influence of alcohol. Some need alcohol to free themselves for sex. Nearly all have *some* alcohol.

The role of alcohol in sex at college is ironic at best. The use of alcohol—by men or women under the age of 21—is illegal. It's a crime to serve alcohol to a minor, and a minor for purposes of alcohol is 21. But for purposes of consenting to sex, it's between 16 and 18, depending on the state. It's never 21.

If universities were to enforce the law regarding liquor and minors, the problem of campus sexual assault would be reduced considerably. But universities turn a blind eye to underage drinking. If universities were to spend one-tenth of the resources they now spend on micromanaging sexual relations on enforcing the liquor laws, they wouldn't need the army of bureaucrats they employ to assure that every student who engages in sex "wants" it "just as much" as their partner does.

Among the worst aspects of current university policies toward sex is the gender discrimination implicit, sometime explicit, in the enforcement of these gender-neutral rules. Taken literally, the "wants [it] just as much" rule is equally applicable to women and men, as is the "assent is not consent" rule. But in practice, these rules are applied only to men. If a woman were to persuade her tired male partner to have a second round of sex—if the man reluctantly says "alright, if that's what you want"—she would be guilty of unconsented sexual assault. But I am aware of no such case.

What I am aware of are many, many cases where the man and woman are both under the influence of alcohol when the sex occurs. Invariably, the man is accused, not the woman, even if the woman initiated the sex. In several such cases, the woman administered oral sex to the man while they were both under the influence. Yet only the man was charged with having unconsented sex with the woman who gave him the blowjob. This is the topsy-turvy world of sexual politics and bureaucracy on campuses today.

And believe it or not, it's all about money. Many university administrators hate these rules and policies. But if they try to change them to make them fairer to their accused male students, they risk losing federal funding—which would be the death knell of many universities. They go along to get along.

This extortion by the federal government was the brainchild of the Obama administration, which mandated—as a condition

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / JOY BROWN

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD GET OUT OF THE BUSINESS OF TELLING UNIVERSITIES HOW TO DEAL WITH ACCUSATIONS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT.

of obtaining federal aid—that every university adopt the lowest possible standard of proof in determining when an accused man is guilty. This standard—a mere preponderance of the evidence, which translates into a 50.1 percent likelihood that the accused did it—is far lower than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard constitutionally required in all criminal cases, or even the "clear and convincing evidence" standard required in non-criminal cases, such as deportation and commitment to a mental hospital.

A 50.1 percent probability means that for every 100 people found guilty, more than 49 of them may be innocent. When you couple this with the lack of due process in campus sex cases—no confrontation of witnesses, no discovery of exculpatory evidence, a strong presumption that the alleged victim is telling the truth, often no lawyer for the accused, and no appeal—the likelihood is that the majority of students who are convicted are in fact innocent.

This should not be surprising, since so many of the cases involve grey-area, rather than black-and-white, situations. Memories are blurred by alcohol, regret, pressure from activists, and sometimes revenge for a relationship gone sour.

To be sure, there are some unambiguous rapes on campuses, and they should be prosecuted vigorously. But they should not be prosecuted by campus bureaucrats who have a heavy thumb on the scales of injustice. All such cases, like cases of non-sexual assault, should be investigated by professional prosecutors and tried in courts of law.

The federal government should get out of the business of telling universities how to deal with accusations of sexual assault. Universities should get out of the business of prosecuting sexual assault. Recent history proves they are terrible at it.

Alan M. Dershowitz is professor emeritus at Harvard Law School and author of 35 books, more than a thousand articles, and numerous blogs. Follow him @AlanDersh

IN THE GARDEN OF EVA

Our December Pet of the Month Eva Lovia is as intelligent as she is gorgeous. Once upon a time, she wanted to be a therapist, earning a Bachelor's in Psychology, and kept it vanilla as a self-proclaimed "serial monogamist." Then came her sexual awakening, and Eva dove into the adult industry in the hopes of hot explorative sex and self-analysis. We love it when a woman's brain is as big and juicy as her ass. Praise.

Photography: Tammy Sands

“What gets me in trouble? Shoes and ridiculously priced restaurants.”

"I love being in an open relationship. Monogamy isn't for everyone."

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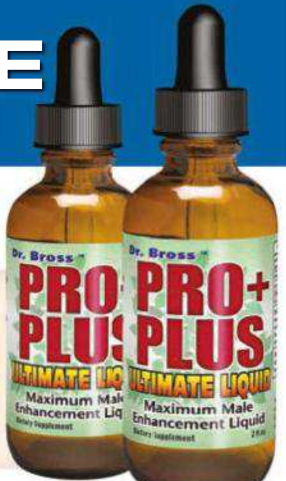

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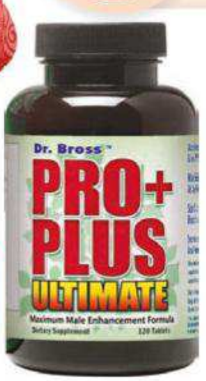

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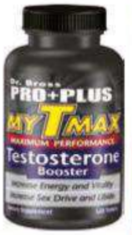

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PENTHOUSE
EVA LOVIA DECEMBER 2017 PET OF THE MONTH

Vital Stats:
32D-24-36
28 years old
5'3"

Hometown: Wilmington, North Carolina

What have you learned from the adult industry?

There's a big misconception, culturally speaking, when it comes to women and their sexuality. We're supposed to be passive and just take it. We can't actively seek out sex without a stigma following us. I see the adult industry as a great outlet for women who want to explore promiscuity, different sex acts, or voyeurism. It's a safe environment to sexually express yourself.

We've always looked at porn as a form of art, or entertainment. But for a lot of people, the puritanical instinct kicks in when they think of porn.

Sex is a physical necessity. When a man stops having sex his brain activity and testosterone plummets. His body deteriorates. To be mentally sharp and physically healthy you should have a happy sex life. You wouldn't apologize for drinking a glass of water when you're thirsty. Why are we apologizing for having sex? It's a real human need. As for the entertainment aspect, people have trouble disconnecting adult actors from their roles. If I saw Matt Damon in a car at a stoplight, I wouldn't start some *Bourne Identity* chase with him. That's just a role he played. Many people see adult stars as one-dimensional.

People are idiots. Speaking of idiots, why did you want to be a therapist?

I've always been the kind of person people open up to. I've always attracted people who need to vent about their problems. I'm the rock of my family. Everyone comes to me when they need advice. I enjoy helping people. I'm fascinated with human behavior.

How did your family take you being in the adult industry?

My mom wasn't happy at first. She found out when I was only doing [lesbian] scenes. She lost her mind a bit. Then she slowly came around and was ironically more supportive when I started doing boy-girl scenes. She's got her own insecurities. I don't think she liked me becoming a sex symbol.

Let's play "Fuck, Marry, Kill," because it's our favorite game here at *Penthouse*.

I would fuck the Rock. He's like a giant mountain I want to climb. I'd marry Ryan Reynolds because he's amazing, and I would kill Samuel L. Jackson because I can't stand his over-the-top acting and when I see his credit card commercials I want to scream.

SEE MORE OF EVA AT PENTHOUSE.COM

ATTACK OF THE ZOMBIE GOLF COURSES

THE GAME OF GOLF HAS A PROBLEM—AND GETTING SNOBBIER IS NOT THE SOLUTION.

BY DREW MILLARD

> *"Golf is the sport of business.... Golf should be something beautiful, elegant, something people aspire to play eventually.... That may be elitist, and perhaps that's what golf needs."*
> –Donald J. Trump to *Forbes*, 2015

ON the golf course, I am alone. I don't mean that in a philosophical or meditative way, though golf certainly has that to offer if you're into that sort of thing. I mean that, standing on the first tee of the Tradition Golf Club at Chapel Ridge—a rolling championship spread designed by North Carolina golf architect Bob Moore in collaboration with 1992 Masters champion Fred Couples, surrounded by a high-end planned housing community, with rural nothingness beyond—I can see a good half of the entire course, and there is no one there.

The first hole is a downhill dogleg, with a sand trap on the left side of the fairway, which then makes a left turn before heading to the green. For a golfer of average skills—which I most certainly am—the best bet is to dink a seven-iron, frequently the most reliable club in a player's bag, 160 yards off the tee into the dead center of the fairway, where gravity will help the ball dribble down a few dozen yards to within shooting distance of the green.

With a bit of luck that puts you another 160 yards from the flagstick. So you would return to that seven-iron, aim for the green, and if you hit a good shot, you two-putt for par. That's how a smart golfer would play this hole. But because I'm a dumb-as-shit golfer, I decide to use my driver, whose massive oblong bubble of a clubhead helps me to hit shots a hundred yards further than I can with the seven-iron. It doesn't matter to me that the hole veers to the left and when I hit my driver wrong my shots scream to the right. It doesn't matter that if I hear the reverberating metallic *thwack* my driver makes when I hit a long, straight shot, my ball will land at the edge of the fairway and then roll off into some trees. These things don't matter because I am dumb as shit, and as such I want my first shot of the day to go as far as it possibly can, and there's nobody here to tell me not to do it.

When I checked in for my tee time at the Tradition's clubhouse—an architectural monstrosity whose general faux-opulence is commensurate with the faux-opulence of the Tradition Golf Club at Chapel Ridge's name—there were maybe eight people in the building besides me, most of whom worked there. There was a guy in a polo shirt dutifully manning the register in the pro shop just in case somebody came in and wanted to buy a Tradition-branded golf visor or a $250 sand wedge or whatever. Another guy sat inside a windowless office pecking away at a desktop computer. In the dining room, a pair of old men sat at a table eating sandwiches served by the bartender, who then began talking to a female friend at the bar, a woman immersed in playing *Skyrim* on her laptop.

Still, there's something undeniably awe-inspiring about golf communities such as Chapel Ridge. You drive for miles, seldom passing anything worth telling anybody about, making one turn after another on a succession of increasingly sketchy country roads, and just as your phone's GPS starts to cut out and you're ready to turn around, it happens: You pass through a gated entrance—a portal into a world of manufactured luxury and privilege.

You continue past rows of McMansions which, regardless of which community you happen to be in, always seem to come in four distinct models—the I Wish I Could Afford a House in the Hamptons, the Divorced Dad Paradise, the Big-and-Tacky, and the New-But-Old-Looking House—until you reach the clubhouse, which generally incorporates at

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / LOST MOUNTAIN STUDIO

OVER THE PAST DECADE AND A HALF, THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE GOLFERS IN AMERICA HAS PLUMMETED FROM 31 MILLION TO 25 MILLION, WHILE THE NUMBER OF GOLF COURSES HAS DROPPED FROM A 2005 HIGH OF ABOUT 16,000 TO ROUGHLY 12,800.

least three of these architectural styles.

Finally, there's the course itself, which for all of the houses around it feels desolate, an underused nuisance which exists in order to justify the property values of the homes. These courses are unplayed and unloved in part because fewer people give a shit about golf these days.

Over the past decade and a half, the number of active golfers in America has plummeted from 31 million to 25 million, while the number of golf courses has dropped from a 2005 high of about 16,000 to roughly 12,800. The ones that remain now struggle to stay in business, cutting costs, their once-pristine holes falling into disrepair. In turn, many of these courses resort to slashing their membership rates and partnering with services like Groupon and GolfNow to offer discounted greens fees akin to your local municipal course, all in hopes of eking out a profit.

I recently decided to take these zombie golf courses up on their offers, playing as many as I could in order to understand how the exclusivity they once sold had become worthless.

Back on the tee, I prepare to do the self-indulgent thing and hit my driver, aiming the shot so that if I strike the ball perfectly it will sail over the sand trap, cutting the dogleg, and give me the fleeting feeling that, perhaps, I am a decent golfer and not wasting my life playing several times a week.

My shot ends up turning out better than good, easily clearing the bunker and taking one lucky bounce after another until it rests 90 yards from the hole. This is dangerous territory for me: If I take a full swing with my pitching wedge

I'll clear the green by 30 yards, while the furthest I can hit my sand wedge—the next club down in my bag—is about 70 yards. So I take a three-quarters swing with my pitching wedge and hope for the best, only to pull my shot left and watch helplessly as it flies into a sand trap.

"Fuck!" I yell, opting to break a rule of golf decorum rather than the club itself. If there had been anyone else around I might have gotten some side-eyes, or maybe even been pulled off the course by a staffer and told not to come back until I'd learned some manners.

But I could drop dead out here and start rotting before anyone found me, so it's not like screaming into the void has any downside.

* * *

DURING the nineties and early aughts, a wave of multimillion-dollar golf communities sprang up across the nation. Developers scrambled to capitalize on the sport's increasing visibility (thanks, Tiger Woods) and create scenic, challenging courses whose views and guarantees of privacy would draw in newly affluent buyers—golfers and non-golfers alike—looking to buy during the housing bubble. They'd wrangle a big-name course architect—either an aging golf legend whose celebrity could draw in casual golf fans or a superstar auteur such as Pete Dye or Tom Fazio, whose hole layouts were so punishing they felt like something out of *120 Days of Sodom*—give them a budget of anywhere between $4.5 million and $20 million, and tell them to get out there and play God. They moved earth to create lakes, valleys, and hills; imported geographically improbable grasses, trees, and shrubbery; and installed elaborate sprinkler systems to provide the water that heaven could not. The end results would be ecstatically beautiful, fantastically challenging, and almost prohibitively expensive to maintain.

THESE DEVELOPERS WEREN'T TRULY IN THE BUSINESS OF GOLF, BUT OF REAL ESTATE, THEIR COURSES SERVING AS MARKETING FOR THE HOUSES THEY WERE BUILDING.

More often than not, these developers weren't truly in the business of golf, but instead that of real estate. Their courses essentially served as marketing for the lots and houses they were building simultaneously—which, due to their proximity to a golf course, they could mark up by as much as 25 percent. Once a developer sold enough properties to turn a snazzy profit, they'd sell the course itself—usually to a company specializing in golf course management, and often at a steep discount—and then move on to the next spontaneously generated prefab paradise.

By 2005, the amount of golf courses in America had become disproportionately higher than the number of golfers there were to play them. You can tell how this is going to end.

My first job was at one of these communities-to-be, a pricey construction in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, overseen by Tom Fazio himself. The year was 2004. I was 15—the town closest to the course had a population that was somewhere in the middle of these two figures.

I worked on the grounds crew along with ten or so other kids from my high school, tending to the half of the course that had already been built while the remaining nine holes were still in progress. Or at least, tending was what we had been hired to do. But we were far more concerned with slacking off—preferably while joyriding on an astronomically expensive piece of industrial equipment. It rained like hell that summer, and we'd pray for mornings when a downpour would hit just as we got to work in the hopes of spending a few hours in the leaky barn where we clocked in, smoking cigarettes and entering into shit-talking contests that I always ended up losing.

My main memory is feeling the wind whipping my face as I rode shotgun in an ATV being driven by a guy we'll call Clayton, going 45 mph down a steep gravel road that connected a cluster of lots to the barn. Clayton sold weed and was the only person I was friends with who'd dropped out of high school. He told me the reason he took the job was so his mom wouldn't ask where all his money came from.

Lots on the course started at $100,000 each, and the only way someone would be able to play Fazio's design was to buy one. The course was to be patient zero for an impending golf explosion in the area; just a few miles away, a different group of developers had secured the necessary permits to build another golf destination featuring a course designed by none other than Arnold Palmer.

It was the trickle-down wishful economic thinking of the first Bush term at its finest. Wealthy investors had decided that there was gold in our hills—or at least, that our hills were gold and that people would want to play golf on them—and enticed the locals with promises of building luxury homes and filling them with rich tourists, which in turn would translate to a stream of construction jobs that would never dry up. Again, we're talking about 2004 here.

Work on the course wrapped up just in time for the bottom to drop out of the housing market, leaving a world-class golf course ringed by lots that had been rendered all but unsellable. Three years later, the tourists still hadn't shown up, the developers of the Arnold Palmer course had gone into foreclosure before they'd had a chance to break ground, and Clayton was dead of an opioid overdose.

* * *

NO matter what people say, I promise you that golf is not nearly as expensive as people make it out to be. It's possible to buy a perfectly usable set of golf clubs at a used sporting goods store for about the same price as it costs to buy the equipment you need to go hunting or camping—and in addition to being able to pick up a round at a zombie golf course for a song, there's almost always at least one affordable public course near wherever you are. When a place charges fifteen bucks for a round of golf instead of $150, they tend to attract a completely different clientele. One that's infinitely more relaxed and friendly, and their numbers are healthy, as opposed to those hoity-toity wastelands desperate for customers.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / FLORIDA STOCK

■■■

BEFORE we go any further, it's worth considering why the fuck anybody would give a shit about golf in the first place. In order to do that, I am now going to tell you about occult masturbation rituals.

Have you ever heard of ecstatic gnosis? It's the process of lasering your focus onto a single, obtainable goal, then physically overwhelming your body until you reach a trance state, during which you're meant to reorient both your conscious and unconscious mind in the hopes that when you snap out of it, every step, every movement, every thought, and every urge you have will, in one way or another, bring you ever so closer to that which you desire.

In order to consecrate this focus, whatever it may be, you've got to make a sigil. Here's how. First, you write the phrase *It is my will to* on a piece of paper, followed by your intention. As in, *It is my will to finish writing this golf article.*

Next, you turn this statement into a symbol, taking all its unique letters (in this example, they would be ITSMYWLOFNHRGACE) and incorporating them into a design, linking them together so that they overlap to the point of illegibility, giving them a power that is no longer linguistic but instead visual. Making it pretty doesn't matter—we're talking about funky jackoff magic here, not a goth arts and crafts project. It just has to stand out in your mind. This is all kinds of hard to communicate, so I made one of my own and designed it around a very shitty drawing of a golf hole, which you can find on page 79. (I'm not going to say whether or not I actually consummated my sigil, but I *will* say that you are reading a finished article about golf, so I'll let you draw your own conclusions.)

EXTERNALIZING ONE'S DESIRES AND THEN DOING SOME GOOFY SHIT SO YOUR MIND CAN CHECK OUT AND LET THE SUBCONSCIOUS DIRECT THE BODY TO MAKE THEM MANIFEST, IS, GIVE OR TAKE, THE ENTIRE POINT OF GOLF.

Now it's time to charge your sigil, which means you're going to need to get aroused. Fortunately, you are holding an issue of *Penthouse* in your hands, so just flip to any of the fine examples of erotic imagery or literature contained within these pages and do your thing. (If, for whatever reason, you'd like to whip out your phone and load up a sexually explicit video, that's fine, too.) Once you get a good rhythm going, stop thinking about sex and start focusing in on the symbol you just drew. Do not, under any circumstances, stop masturbating.

Still masturbating? Great. Keep going, and as you venture closer and closer to orgasm, your sigil should envelop your consciousness further and further, to the point that when you actually come, you should be able to close your eyes and still see it perfectly.

Lastly—and this part is key; if you don't do this you might as well have masturbated to normal sex stuff—you've got to destroy the sigil. You can eat it—though, disclaimer, you may have gotten some sexual fluids on it—burn it, bury it, or if that stuff seems like going a pube too far, you can always just flush it down the toilet or throw it in the trash. Once all this is over with, try to put the whole thing out of your mind, which you'll probably want to do regardless since you just masturbated to a visual representation of your greatest achievable extant desire because a magazine article told you to.

Externalizing one's desires and then doing some goofy shit so that your mind can check out and let the subconscious direct the body to make them manifest, is, give or take, the entire point of golf. It is a ritual, a wholly imprecise one, in which the outcome is less important than the practice of carrying it out. As John Updike wrote in his collection *Golf Dreams,* "Golf so transforms one's somatic sense...that truth itself seems about to break through the exacerbated and as it were debunked fabric of mundane reality." It is this notion—that golf is fundamentally a game of discovery—that cuts to the core of the sport's roots.

Hitting some shit with a stick is a fundamental human impulse, whether we're talking about the Mayans beating on proto-piñatas or ancient Egyptians playing early ball-and-stick games.

Around the time that Europe exited the Middle Ages and entered the Renaissance, commoners in both Scotland and Holland—nations that enjoyed a prominent trading relationship at the time—began using shepherds' crooks to hit rocks at targets in a game called Colf.

While Dutch Colf evolved into what we now know today as field hockey, shepherds on the Scottish coast, for reasons I can only assume involved growing bored of bestiality, began putting their own spin on the game. These were blue-collar folk—essentially tenant farmers—who in time came to incorporate unique elements of the harsh seaside terrain into tracks that resembled the golf holes of today. The fields that their sheep grazed on became fairways; shorter and smaller patches of grass preferred by rabbits became the greens; pockets of hillside that had been covered by sand blown in from the ocean became sand traps. In fact, the term "links" did not originally refer to golf courses but instead to geographic formations dotting the Scottish coast which contained this unique hodgepodge of naturally occurring features.

Early golf was a game not only of skill and strategy but of creativity and conceptualization: In a time when there were no golf courses, the first step to a round of golf was to survey the landscape and decide *where* the golf course actually was.

Only in relatively recent years—i.e., the very tail end of the 1800s—did golf take on the associations with wealth and status that have come to define it to this day. After the Industrial Revolution, there arose a group of rich Scottish factory owners, who for all of their newfound wealth would never be able to buy the ancestral heritage required to join the Scottish royal elite.

Still, these dudes had money, dammit, and they wanted to use it to set themselves apart from those who didn't. So—and, second disclaimer, I am not a historian; what you're reading is the distillation of a glut of scholarly research whose accounts are occasionally in conflict—the turn-of-

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / NUKS PHOTOS

the-century Scottish nouveau riche banded together to form golf clubs, ones whose headquarters were situated next to land that was maintained for the express purpose of golfing on it. These clubs imposed strict rules about attire, equipment, and decorum, affecting the conduct of royals while introducing financial barriers to entry that would keep the poors from crashing the party.

A century later and an ocean away, golf still serves this function. Take the Preserve at Jordan Lake, a sister community of Chapel Ridge whose course was designed by the retired professional golfer Davis Love III. Located next to a busy public lake that's popular among black and Latino families, the Preserve's website boasts that it's a "pristine, natural, and tranquil community that's planned for privacy and the enjoyment of nature."

Meanwhile, a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Private Enterprise* found that "many homeowners in low-income counties have a desire to sort themselves in[to] exclusive neighborhoods such as golf communities." In other words, there's empirical evidence that people live on golf courses not because they want to play golf, but so that they can be around other people who have enough money to live on a golf course.

The first thing I notice once I step inside the clubhouse at the Preserve is a foyer sign displaying the results of a recent club tournament. Golf tourneys traditionally have divided players into groups called "flights," which denote who's teeing off when and are often named after letters or colors. As I look at scores from golfers named Preston, Scott, Vann, and Todd, my eyes bug out of my head. The name of their group is—I shit you not—"White Flight."

While I'm sure there wasn't a specifically racist intent to the sign, the very fact that nobody organizing the tournament realized that having the phrase hanging up in a clubhouse is a bad look, speaks to why golf is in such dire straits these days—it's seriously out of touch. A big reason there are fewer golfers now is that millennials, many of them navigating a morass of debt and struggling in the gig economy, simply aren't as interested in the game as they once were.

"Golf could stand to chill a little," asserted a 2015 report from the National Golf Foundation, embarrassingly titled *#Golf and the Millennial Generation*. The report suggested that courses cater to millennials by creating "selfie stations" on particularly photogenic holes and encouraging golfers to post hashtagged course pictures on Instagram. It also recommended embracing "emerging technologies" by installing Bluetooth speakers in golf carts, or even doing away with carts altogether and replacing them with motorized skateboards designed to hold a golf bag. Finally, it encouraged golf courses to create a more "authentic" atmosphere, which would involve giving millennials free beer and intimating that they might be able to meet someone at the course to have sex with.

Needless to say, this is a massively dumb way to think about golf. To put it in economics terms, golf is not a "luxury good"—something that, due to its intrinsic value, will always cost more than its competitors—as much as it's a "status good." Which is to say, the idea that golf is a sport for rich people is something that's socially constructed through history and context. It's a myth—a product of magical thinking that at its core is just as absurd as believing that jacking-off to a symbol representing your greatest wish will make it come true.

Rather than half-assedly attempting to trick millennials into spending what little money they have on expensive golf bullshit, it seems easier for golf to simply accept that it no longer enjoys the status it once had and instead return to its roots as a game of the masses, something smelly Scottish shepherds did to kill time. Modern life is hell, and what pretty much everybody needs is to get off their phones, go outside, and appreciate the natural beauty and tranquility of a world that far too often tells us to stay indoors so we can sit in front of our devices while juggling 15 different tasks at once. Golf is about remaining present in the moment, concentrating on one swing after another, and building a score incrementally while accepting bad shots and missed opportunities as inevitable, but not irreversible.

GOLF NEEDS TO ACCEPT THAT IT NO LONGER ENJOYS THE STATUS IT ONCE HAD AND SHOULD RETURN TO ITS ROOTS AS A GAME SCOTTISH SHEPHERDS PLAYED TO KILL TIME.

However, the people for whom golf used to be big business would very much enjoy it if the masses renewed their collective belief that golf was a signifier of wealth worth pursuing. To that end, many courses, wary of the public perception that they waste water and wreak havoc on local animal populations, have taken steps to become more environmentally friendly. Some have cut down on water usage through installing natural irrigation systems, while others have partnered with the preservationist-minded Audubon Society and modified their courses to become more wildlife-friendly. These so-called "eco-courses" are the golf equivalent of a Tesla—sure, they're better for the environment, but instead of becoming sustainable so that they can lower their costs, they use their eco-friendliness as a marketing gimmick to increase their value as "status goods."

As luck would have it, there just so happens to be one of these courses within driving distance of my house. The Lonnie Poole Golf Course at NC State University functions as both an Audubon-approved wildlife preserve and a laboratory for the university's turf sciences program to experiment with cutting-edge sustainability practices. What's more, the course was designed by Arnold Palmer, who laid the holes out in a way that minimally altered the land the course was built upon. These practices make sense for golf—in part because the less you disturb the natural environment, the less it costs to build the thing and maintain it. But in spite of all of this, it will still set you back $85 to book a round during peak hours—which, though it's nowhere near the hundreds it costs to play at a premier golf course, is still about four times as much as I'd paid on my zombie golf outings. That said, I figured I owed it to Arnie, seeing as he was deprived of the opportunity to lay a golf course down where I grew up. So I booked myself a tee time on a Saturday afternoon, paying the slightly less insane late-play rate of $50.

The first person I see in the lobby of the Lonnie Pool clubhouse is a preppy-looking guy sitting at a card table in front of a sticker-covered laptop. He's a gun-owning College Republican who leans Libertarian and likes Trump—if the laptop is his—and when I tell him I'm here to play the course he lets me know with a look I approached the wrong guy. "Oh yeah, no, uh, sorry man," he says with all the social graces of a kid who grew up on a golf course, "you gotta go upstairs for that."

You've got to hand it to eco-courses—they are indeed beautiful, and I definitely felt like less of a dick playing here than if I'd been playing on a course like Shadow Creek in Las Vegas, a literal golf oasis in the desert featuring man-made waterfalls, thousands of imported trees, and what I can only assume is a water bill that would give Al Gore a heart attack.

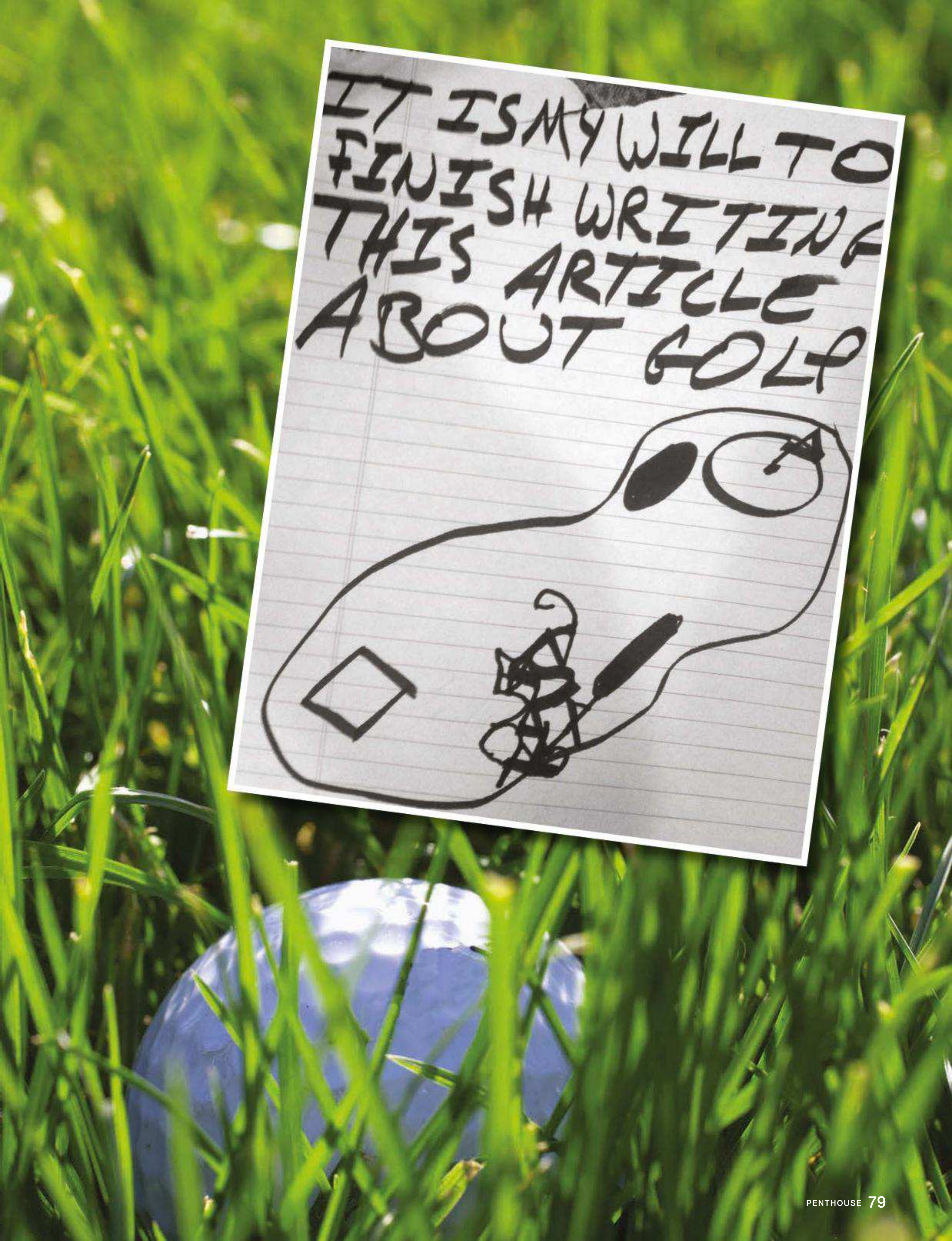
Lonnie Poole, though, is stuffed to the gills with other golfers, many of them playing slower than molasses due to the fact that Arnold Palmer made the course hard as shit. All the sustainability in the world can't make up for the moment when, mid-swing on the 18th hole, a pissed-off dad on a parallel fairway slams his club on the top of his golf cart because he just hooked a shot into a deer habitat. And while I feel for him—after all, golf can be a maddening game, and if you've got to let off some steam, you've got to let off some steam—his outburst breaks my concentration and causes me to shank my own shot. While rummaging through my golf bag for another ball, I silently vow to create a second sigil—this one loaded with the intent of making that guy eat shit. The problem with money, ultimately, is it makes people feel like they've bought a license to act with impunity.

After all the stuffiness I'd subjected myself to, I decide to give myself a break and head to a nearby municipal course, one that's been owned by the same family since it opened over 50 years ago. Unlike the golf communities I'd been skulking around on, there were actually people here, and unlike NC State's eco-course, those people actually seemed to be having fun.

If anything, these courses are the true face of golf, and as I play my 18 holes I keep thinking that the golf industry's attempts to restore the game to its once-aspirational status are missing the point—like a drive hooked into a bunker.

Drew Millard is a freelance writer living in Durham, North Carolina. His work has appeared in VICE, The New York Times, and Hazlitt. Find him on Twitter at @drewmillard

BACKGROUND PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BRANKO JOVANOVIC



IT IS MY WILL TO
FINISH WRITING
THIS ARTICLE
ABOUT GOLF

CALIFORNIA GIRL

The beauty of Southern California is that when everyone else is shoveling snow and freezing their tits off, we're all working on our tans thinking, *What is winter, for real?* We took full advantage of the blazing sun and popped our December CyberCutie Zara Jade poolside for the afternoon just because we could. Born and raised in SoCal, this sultry newbie was happy to rip off her bikini and get wild in the water.

Photography: Gerald De Behr

Vital Stats:
34A-23-27
22 years old
5'2"
Hometown: Moreno Valley, California

What's the best part about camming, besides not having a boss?

The community. The friends I've made are the most genuine people. I'm so thankful for the models I've become close with. We can not talk for months and when we reconnect it's like nothing has changed.

If you could have an orgy with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?

Jim Morrison and Riley Reid. Weird combo, but I'm there.

What was the worst job you ever had?

I was 15 years old and working at the second oldest hotel in California. It was a four-story building and there was no elevator. I was the laundry girl, so I had to carry bags of hot laundry up and down the stairs.

So now you hate doing laundry?

I'm triggered every time I get clothes out of the dryer. [Laughs]

You're a Southern California girl. It's so rare to find someone who isn't a transplant here. Would you ever leave L.A.?

I think about it all the time. I just got out of a long-term relationship and feel free. I always felt stuck here, but now I want to explore and go to Seattle, Portland, everywhere. I recently went to Chicago for Exotica and fell in love with the city. It's such a beautiful city. The only thing that turns me off is the weather. I'm spoiled with this California weather.

If you could live in any era, when would it be?

I think the eighties would have been a cool time to be in your twenties. It just seemed wild and fun.

You'd have been doing a lot of coke and probably had a bad perm.

I'm almost there with the bob! All I need is some workout gear and I'm ready to go.

Find more of Zara Jade at www.chaturbate.com/zara_/ or see more at Penthouse.com

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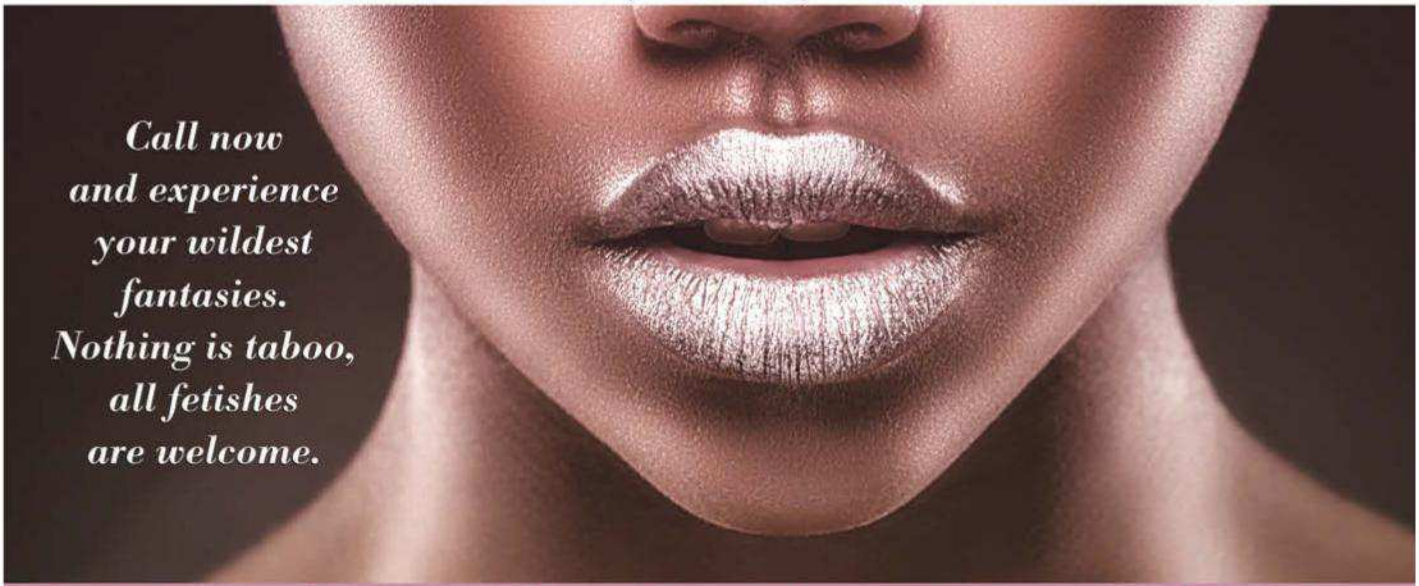

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Goldmoney cofounder Josh Crumb

GOLDEN BOY

COFOUNDER AND CFO OF GOLDMONEY INC., JOSH CRUMB, TALKS ABOUT THE EARTH'S MOST PRECIOUS METAL.

INTERVIEW BY MISH BARBER-WAY

PRESIDENT Richard Nixon took the U.S. dollar off the gold standard on August 15, 1971. It's alleged that after the infamous announcement, Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns said, "What a tragedy for mankind!"

Nixon thought that freeing the dollar from gold would cause the precious metal's value to skyrocket, while stopping foreigners from sucking the American gold reserves dry. Apparently, freed from gold, the Fed could print money like it was going out of style. Going off the gold and implementing a 90-day wage-price freeze paused inflation and the rise of unemployment, but only temporarily.

The gold debate continues today, clouded by politics. Reducing the dollar's ties to gold, as America first did to a great extent in 1933, proved to have major economic benefits back then. According to Liaquat Ahamed's 2009 book *Lords of Finance,* "Most economists now agree that 90 percent of the reason why the U.S. got out of the Great Depression was the break with gold."

Conservative financial skeptics argue that the gold standard helps limit government spending. Investment strategist Mark Luschini once equated the gold standard to a government debit card, rather than a credit card. "The debit card holder can only spend what he or she has in the bank," he remarked. However, more progressive thinkers argue that the gold standard leaves the Fed powerless in times of economic decline. Furthermore, the supply of gold can be unreliable. We couldn't possibly go back now without causing "massive damage to the economy," American Enterprise Institute economist John Makin noted.

But Goldmoney Inc. cofounder Josh Crumb prefers to keep politics out of the discussion of gold. "I'm not some big anti-government guy," he tells *Penthouse*. "I'm from Colorado, so I have a libertarian outlook, but I'm also originally from Canada and I think that the government can work pretty well."

Crumb, who holds a master's degree in Mineral Economics, a graduate certificate in International Political Economy, and a bachelor's in Engineering from the Colorado School of Mines, takes a logical, geologist's approach to the value of gold: This is a tangible metal object that will not disintegrate. This is also the philosophy behind his company.

Goldmoney Inc. is an alternative banking system dedicated to making physical gold and precious metal accessible to anyone and everyone. All you need is a legal ID and you can open a Goldmoney Holding, an online account that "allows you to securely invest in precious metals owned in your name at insured vaults across five countries."

Goldmoney is the world's first publicly traded and regulated financial institution to allow qualified clients to exchange

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOLDMONEY INC.

their cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, for nine different currencies as well as gold, silver, and platinum. Championed by financial hotshot Peter Schiff, Goldmoney Inc. presents an intriguing alternative for critics of the U.S. monetary system, who lament its reliance on bloated government spending and rising inflation.

Crumb himself is not that kind of critic. Drawing on his mining experience and years working as Senior Metals Strategist at Goldman Sachs in the Global Economics, Commodities, and Strategies Research Division, he is simply an enthusiast who wants to present a currency option alongside federal money and the increasingly popular cryptocurrencies.

We sat down with Crumb to try to understand why Goldmoney, and why now?

How did you get to where you are today?
I'm a mining engineer, so I built mines, worked in mines, and I have been in many different businesses over the years. But I take a geologist, or natural systems, approach to everything. When I saw what was going to be the financial crisis back in 2006 and 2007, I got very curious. And just as I learned about geology or anything else for that matter, I took a deep dive to try to understand what money actually is.

If you think of money as a technology, a tool of technology, why is [our current system] not working very well? I became interested in the financial sector and it led me down this path as the whole system was about to tip over. That was when I met a number of people at Goldman Sachs, where I was trying to hedge what was going to happen with the companies I was working for. Long story short, when the financial crisis happened, I went over to work at Goldman. They hired me once they knew I was right. [*Laughs*]

Wow.
My cofounder had a similar path. He was more closely tied to that world. He's from Los Angeles and worked as a hedge fund manager, but he is an independent thinker, and we both came to the conclusion that our current monetary technology does not work very well. Goldmoney started as a philosophy, more than a business model. We asked ourselves how we go about fixing the flaws in the monetary system, or at least present another option.

What is the purpose of this alternative bank?
There are a lot of academic theories about gold and money. Furthermore, discussions about money tend to become political. We tried to strip that all away. We asked ourselves, *What has worked best throughout time?* Gold always comes back. The very first word for money was really describing gold—its weight and value. Think about forms of measurement. A meter is a meter. A gram is a gram. You can't change that. But somehow a dollar can change wildly from one week to another. That's not a very good measurement system.

Money as a form of measurement—that's new to me.
Cryptocurrencies also came into play. There are people thinking about alternatives to the federal reserve, the banking system. It just doesn't work for everyone. Cryptocurrency is fascinating. We think it's one of the most interesting experiments in money that has happened in a long time. But going back to gold, and this is where the engineer and geologist in me comes back in, what is the one thing that money is supposed to do? It's supposed to last. Of course, there are many economic definitions, but let's simplify. If you produce an apple and it rots quickly, it could not work as currency because it does not sustain. The one thing you want your money to do is last. You do not want it to corrode in front of you. Now, if you look at the periodic table and you go through the elements, check off the list one by one, you end up with two elements that work the best: silver and gold. This isn't politics or some academic theory. It's nature. These are the two most durable elements. These are the noble, precious metals. In some ways, our business is very technologically advanced. We're doing many things that have never been done before in the gold business, such as the way you can buy and sell it, use it as money online—all of that is very new. But the core of our business is simple. Gold has remained valuable for 5,000 years. It will never stop working.

This is what attracted me to the Goldmoney concept. Safety. Cryptocurrency and the federal reserve are not backed by the gold standard. There are infinite possibilities for these "currencies" to rise to great heights, then plummet to failure.
Just like anything else, money is a tool. Try to think about it in those terms. *What do I use this for?* Gold, again, is something that, 100 years from now, you can hand down to your ancestors because it will never corrode. It is tangible and will always be. Now, like you said, cryptocurrency does not have that potential. It can rise and fall, and at the end of the day it's a mathematical abstraction just like our banking system. But what cryptocurrency does have, which is so important, is that it's a tool that works outside of our government-monitored world. It doesn't need these centralized organizations like the government or your bank to exist, and it allows you to avoid these big systems.

Cryptocurrency is rebellious in that way.
Absolutely. Just like you have more choices in supermarkets, or music, or stories, there is no reason why money can't be similar. I can have my cryptocurrency for certain things, then my U.S. dollars, my Canadian dollars, and my gold. They all serve a purpose. At the end of the day [our company] believes in choice. We believe the world works better when people have options.

What would you say to someone who argues that gold's value can change in the distant future? What if we get to a world where precious metals are no longer as valuable, and have been replaced by who-knows-what?
That argument is a trap. You are arguing something hypothetical. The easiest rebuttal is looking back in history. If someone questioned gold losing its value in 10 years, well, let's look back 10 years, 100 years. Did gold lose value then? No. What did lose value? The U.S. dollar. Objectively, on every metric, it did. Grocery store prices are higher, your education costs are higher—so what does that mean? It means that the dollar lost its value in comparison to everything.

Look, no one can predict the future, but if you look at the past, gold has been an objectively better monetary tool than anything else. Some academic can paint you a theory about what could happen 10 years from now, but they can never dispute the truth that gold has done better than anything.

Let's say someone like me who is not stinking rich wants to put some of my assets into Goldmoney. How

welcoming is your service to the general public?
Anyone can open a holding with us. That's something that differentiates us from Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. We believe we want to be outside of the banking system, but we are not outside of the regulatory system. The problem with Bitcoin, which is also one of its strengths, is that it is not legal.

It's some dark-web shit!
[*Laughs*] That's a problem when someone wants to use it legitimately. Gold is different. Goldmoney is just like your bank or broker, and we have to know who the customer is. We need your address and information, because I don't want to go to jail. The other part of that is that we are storing gold for you. We can't store gold for someone anonymous.

And if I want to take out all my money from Goldmoney? You'll send me a big ol' box of gold?
There are multiple ways. We can ship the gold right to you. We can sell it, and wire it back into your bank account. And the third option would be redeeming it for 24K gold jewelry.

Even for a skeptic, Goldmoney feels like a safe bet.
If you had to describe what our business tries to do, it's to create the safest place for you to put your savings. That really is the core of our philosophy. The company we originally started was called BitGold, but we eventually bought the company Goldmoney Inc. Anyway, during the financial crisis, Goldmoney did not lose a dollar of their customers' money. In fact, their value went up. We are the opposite of the bank. We are the place where you want to be when shit hits the fan.

With a Goldmoney Inc. account, do I get a card just like with any other bank for use to buy anything anywhere?
Remember 20 years ago how a Visa debit card from Wells Fargo was a novelty? Those are now everywhere. Why can't we do that on a gold balance, instead of a U.S. dollar balance? We created the technology to be able to use a card where your account is backed by gold. That simple.

I have investments in the stock market, but I also have a safety bulk that just sits in my bank account accumulating very little interest. Why wouldn't I just move it into gold?
Exactly. Look, I'm not one of these guys who thinks that the world is going to end next year. My pitch is that no matter what happens, you should have some of your wealth invested in precious metals. That has always been very basic financial advice.

Of course!
Ten percent of your investable liquid savings should be in precious metals. That adage has lasted through history—it checks out mathematically. The largest hedge fund manager in the world has said, "If you don't have 10 percent of your money in gold, I want to hear a very good reason why." Because we all know the best portfolio has 10 percent in gold. So many people don't do this because they think it's difficult, or they don't like the political ideology associated with gold. Ideology has nothing to do with it. This is an element beneath the Earth's crust that will last forever.

What is your goal for the future?
We have an opportunity that no other financial institution has to build relationships with customers in every part of the world. There's not a single country that doesn't recognize gold as valuable. In fact, I would say the United States is one of the countries that devalues gold the most. If you go to Asia or South America, no one argues our justifications. They go, "Of course." But for some reason, the U.S. just got off that view of gold. We wanted to a build a financial business that can be relevant to anyone and everyone in the world.

Mish Barber-Way is the smartest dumb blonde ever. (That is why she is our Executive Editor.)

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / MARK AGNOR

PET TESTED, PET APPROVED

PENTHOUSE PETS LAYLA SIN AND OLIVE GLASS TEST OUT THE HOTTEST SEX TOYS ON THE MARKET.

Layla Sin, August 2015 Pet of the Month

LIBERATOR BED BUCKLER $70

1

liberator.com

Rating: 4/5

At first sight of the cuffs and blindfold, my mind was racing with excitement. I oiled my body up and surprised my partner with this toy. The cuffs were easy to put on and left marks on the skin. It's so simple to put together, it took me about five minutes. A great toy to stimulate a couple's sex life!

BED BUCKLER
LIBERATOR

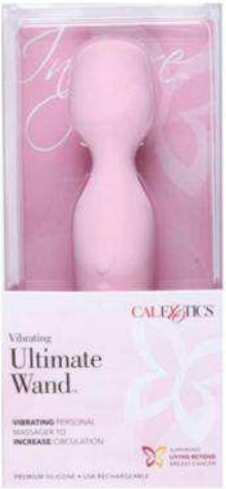
INSPIRE VIBRATING ULTIMATE WAND $43

2

calexotics.com

Rating: 5/5

This toy looks all cute and innocent with its baby pink silicone and soft touch, but it's so powerful. The multispeed setting gets pretty fast. The only downside was that I had to charge it for seven hours before using it. But once it was ready, it worked its magic and I had two orgasms in twenty minutes! This toy exceeded my expectations.


CALEXOTICS
Vibrating
Ultimate Wand
VIBRATING PERSONAL MASSAGER TO INCREASE CIRCULATION

THE PENILIZER PENIS MASSAGER $35

3

thepenilizer.com

Rating: 3/5

Watching Jay use this penis massager was wild. I've never seen a toy like this before. I had the urge to hold the massager for him and help him myself. It was funny to watch. A positive impact, but not what I expected!

From Jay: This massager was very pleasant. You can easily regulate the grip on this toy as well as the speed. I'd recommend this toy for all you guys.

NEW SILICONE TECHNOLOGY
penilizer
PENIS MASSAGER
NEW

Olive Glass, June 2017 Pet of the Month

4

CALEXOTICS SILICONE MARVELOUS MASSAGER $60

calexotics.com

Rating: 5/5

I loved how this toy fit right in my fingers. Excellent design! The vibration was very powerful with a variety of patterns. I can't wait to go on a trip with this little guy. I finally found a toy that can keep up with me when I travel. The retro-looking packaging is super cute. A must-have!

CALEXOTICS
Silicone
Marvelous
Massager
EASY TO OPERATE
FUN IN THE PALM
OF YOUR HAND

5

NOVA BY WE-VIBE $60

we-vibe.com

Rating: 4/5

I typically love We-Vibe toys, so I was excited when this one delivered. Sleek, pretty, and the silicone was soft and flexible. I loved how well the vibrator fit into my vagina and the further inside I pressed it the more intense the clit stimulator became. I came really hard! I also love that they include a water-based lube in the package. Definitely a new favorite.

WE-VIBE
Nova

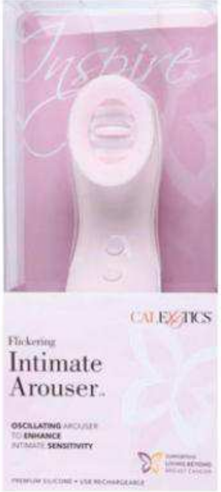
6

INSPIRE FLICKERING INTIMATE AROUSER $35

calexotics.com

Rating: 2/5

I wanted to love this toy. It's such a creative, fun design and the company seems very compassionate. But the little flickering tip actually hurt. It felt like tiny slaps on my clit and left me feeling irritated. The suction part had an odd sensation. The whole experience was noisy and uncomfortable.


Inspire
CALEXOTICS
Flickering
Intimate
Arouser.
OSCILLATING AROUSER
TO ENHANCE
INTIMATE SENSITIVITY

SEAL & DELIVER

BY JENNY NORDBAK

I WAS about to come and I didn't even know who was touching me.

Somewhere in the lust-addled depths of my brain, I knew I wasn't the kind of girl who did this sort of thing. I was a professional dominatrix, so certainly I was more comfortable with human sexuality than your average bear, but this was different. I was used to being in control, calling the shots, directing my subs—rarely ever being vulnerable enough to put my own pleasure on the line. But curiosity had gotten the better of me this time.

By now I was no stranger to anything-goes play parties where my fellow hedonists celebrated all that pleasure had to offer. I generally played with friends and had a good time, but never strayed very far outside of my comfort zone.

Someone brought a vac-bed to this party, though, and I had never seen such a contraption. A deflated air mattress was placed on top of a second inflated air mattress. The participant climbed into the deflated air mattress through a sealable opening in the side, and then lay down, aligning with the only holes in the fabric—one at the mouth to breathe through, and one cleverly placed access point at the genitals. Once they were situated, a vacuum was attached to the vent of the air mattress, and all of the air was sucked out. The fabric vacuum-sealed around them, leaving no gaps. It looked bizarre and intriguing and just a little scary.

I stood and watched a woman play in it first. Once she was sealed in, people circled her, and hands began roaming all over her body across the thick fabric. Her husband straddled her and began fingering her through the hole in the mattress while the rest of the group continued stroking her body. It only took moments for her moans to turn to screams as she came.

Impulsively, I volunteered to go next without stopping to think about it. I had to know what it felt like. I recruited my close friend and coworker, Raven, to be in charge and keep things in a territory she knew I was comfortable with. I really just wanted to know what it felt like to be sealed in there. I had no intention of going as far as the last chick.

My first impression was that it was hot and incredibly loud with the sound of the vacuum roaring in my ears. Then, the fabric quickly started to compress tightly against my skin, and within seconds I was sealed in. It sealed so tightly around me that I couldn't move any part of my body even a fraction of an inch. It felt like I had been sealed in concrete and yet I was floating on a bed of air. I was impossibly heavy and weightless at the same time. I was utterly powerless, but I wasn't panicking.

A hand squeezed my shoulder and I heard Raven's voice against my ear asking, "Do you want to try some sensation play?"

I felt so isolated that I was surprised to remember I could speak through the air hole.

"Sure," I said, laughing a little self-consciously.

I had meant that just Raven should touch me, but at least eight hands were instantly rubbing my body through the heavy fabric. I considered protesting, but it felt so good that I just let it happen.

I expected the sensations to be muted through the air mattress, but it simply spread the feeling and intensified my reactions. As a pair of small hands caressed my breasts, I felt myself straining to arch up into the touch, but I couldn't move against the pressure of the vacuum seal.

I heard Raven's voice against my ear again asking, "Does Scarlett want more?"

My voice sounded distorted as I moaned, "Mmm, yes please, Mistress."

I felt her climb on top of me, straddling my hips with delicious pressure, forcing me deeper against the weightlessness beneath me. I had felt helpless, but now I felt pinned, like a spider trapped in her web.

Without warning, she kissed me deeply, molding her body against mine. Her tongue delved into my mouth possessively, and I was lost to the sensations. I couldn't hear or see anything. I couldn't move. I could only breathe because she was letting me. I wanted more and she seemed to read my mind. The heel of her hand ground hard against my aching clit, making me cry out. I could feel other hands squeezing and rubbing, but I had forgotten that they were associated with strangers.

The heel of her hand was replaced with two fingers rubbing back and forth, and suddenly I wondered if it was even Raven

I COULD ONLY BREATHE BECAUSE SHE WAS LETTING ME. I WANTED MORE AND SHE SEEMED TO READ MY MIND.

pleasuring me anymore. I tried to make sense of the pressure and orientation of the people around me, but it was pointless. In the moment, I didn't really care.

Another hand took over, and this one found just the right pressure and speed to drive me wild. A secret part of me wanted someone to climb on top, push my thong to one side, and fuck me senseless while I was incapable of doing anything but lying there moaning. I was too scared to voice that desire, so I simply lost myself in the fantasy of it.

Before I could overthink what was happening, I came to a spectacular climax—and I knew I wasn't quiet about it.

I panted for a few moments and the hands stopped roaming one at a time. The vacuum was turned off, and slowly the pressure around me began to ease until I was able to slide out of the opening. I felt a little sheepish as I made eye contact with the group of people who had just participated in my pleasure until I saw the way they were all grinning. I knew a few of them, but some were total strangers. Still, there was nothing to be ashamed of. No one was judging me.

Raven handed my dress to me and gave me a hug as I stood on shaky legs.

"Wanna know who got you off?" she asked teasingly.

I looked at the faces around me, but I had no idea. I paused to consider it.

"Nah," I said. "It's more fun if I never know."

Jenny Nordbak is a retired dominatrix and author of The Scarlett Letters: My Secret Year of Men in an L.A. Dungeon.

PAIRING NICELY

Abigail Mac and Cameron Dee had plans for a simple girls' night in. Uncork a bottle of Riesling, nibble on some fruit and French cheese, maybe watch a few episodes of *Real Housewives*. Nothing crazy. But Abigail forgot how horny white wine makes her and the whole plan went south after she had a few sips. We're not complaining. Their night in sounded boring as fuck anyway.

Photography: Chad Lee

See more of Cameron and Abigail at PENTHOUSE.com

HOT LINES

BY LEAH MCSWEENEY

DIRTBAG

Hi Leah. I really need to know how I can fuck my ex-girlfriend's twin sister. I want her twin sister now that I have moved on. I know for a fact that you also have a twin sister and you have fucked her boyfriend! Leah, tell me how to manifest this impeccable goal of mine. I need to accomplish this feat for whatever it's worth. There has to be a very good explanation for what happened between you two. How did you end up sharing the same man's dick??? Texas

Hi Texas. I actually don't have a twin sister but I will take that as a huge compliment because my sister is extremely hot. I'm also pretty sure we have never shared the same dick. Though there are a few guys we might have swapped the same saliva with on a drunken blackout night. It's major sister code to never share dick. At least with me and mine. Maybe your ex and her sister hate each other? That would be the only way you would have a shot. Maybe you still love the original twin. I mean, maybe you haven't really moved on—after all, it's her twin you're after. If you really have moved on, wouldn't you want someone that doesn't look identical to your ex? Think about that.

By the way, you sound like a piece of shit.

KEEP IT MOVING

Hey Leah. I recently met a guy who's been separated for a year and a half and I'm pretty into him. We hooked up and he messaged me late a few nights ago when he was drunk. Do you think I should leave it alone since it seems like just a hookup situation, or try and take it further? And if so, how? I have such a hard time being open and vulnerable. Any advice would be great. K.

K: It sounds like it's too soon to tell whether this is something that's good for you or not. You have to give it more time. Being separated for a year and a half is a long time, so there aren't any red flags there. Also, what's wrong with a hookup situation? Or do you know you need something more? Take it slow with this guy if you are having hesitation. Don't forget to keep a rotating roster of men. It helps keep things from getting too serious with any of them. Besides, it's likely that they are all assholes who will disappoint you. Focus on YOU and making MONEY. Men will always disappoint, but owning real estate won't ever cheat on you.

Sorry I'm such a jaded bitch!

SEVEN YEAR ITCH

Hi Leah. I have been with the father of my two children for seven years, but we never married. We dated for two months and then I got pregnant. From the start there were red flags, but I stuck it out for the sake of my kids. It's been a real rocky relationship with a lot of fighting and miscommunication. He is unable to connect emotionally and always shuts down when I want to talk about us. I've suggested couples therapy, but he won't go. Over the last year, he has been pulling away dramatically. He didn't have the courage to end it, so I did. To make the transition easier, I told him he could temporarily live in the basement. My concern is that he won't find the motivation to leave. After I broke up with him, a coworker confessed his true feelings for me. He is a sweet person and we have a strong connection. I am in no way ready for another relationship, but in the meantime, I've developed an emotional relationship with this guy to cope. He is also going through a serious breakup, so we're leaning on each other for support. I'm developing the urge to turn this emotional relationship into a physical one. The last time I felt this way was over seven years ago, and while it's exciting, it's also very frustrating because for one, I should be focusing on my situation, and two, my children's father is still living with me. I've spent the last seven years sacrificing my happiness for my children's father and our kids. I'm a great mom, but I also have needs and feel like I've earned the right to be selfish. Should I give in to my sexual urges despite my children's father living in the house, or should I push those feelings aside and wait?

Girl!! Tell your bum-ass baby daddy to find a new place to live! Or have him babysit so you can go get some new dick from your coworker. You are a stand-up woman! Honestly, kudos to you for sacrificing your own happiness to try to make your family work, but you only live once, babe. This is it, so make it COUNT! Life is too short to stay with a caveman who can't communicate. I think you should absolutely give in to your sexual desires and urges. You've had them on the back burner for seven fucking years. You are not being selfish by wanting to enjoy yourself. Your kids need you to be happy. You will be a better mom when you are getting dicked-down properly. You can have a sexy love affair while also focusing on how to get your kid's dad the fuck out of the house. I promise. Now, go live your best life, girl!

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY LEAH MCSWEENEY

YOU WILL BE A BETTER MOM WHEN YOU ARE GETTING DICKED-DOWN PROPERLY.

THE RED SEA

Hi Leah! Dedy from the Period Blog here. First of all, thank you for reviewing the Little Red Kit! Second of all, I've been following you since 2008. Married to the Mob gave me my badass confidence to pursue anything I put my mind to and has set me on the path that I am on today! So, thank you for that.

As you know, menstrual education is super important for both females and males, and is even more important as we grow older and start thinking about period sex. What are your thoughts on period sex? Do you love it? Hate it? Tips?

Hi Dedy! Shout-out to the Period Blog! Your Little Red Kit is amazing and I salute your for being so active in the fight against the menstrual taboo!

Okay, period sex. If a man isn't down to fuck you on your period, he is not a man. Maybe at the beginning of your cycle, sex can wait because that heavy flow is no joke. But it's all about throwing that towel down on the bed (or floor or dining table) and getting bloody and nasty. There is always the shower (I'm not a shower-sex person, but it's great for period sex). And the best part about period sex? No chance of getting pregnant! When I'm in a relationship or have a steady booty call, I absolutely don't expect the sex to be put on pause because I have my period. I even expect to get my pussy eaten while my tampon is in. I've had a boyfriend pull my tampon out with his teeth. (That's called "mousetailing," by the way.) So, I don't love or hate it, it's just something that happens, and for me, I need a man who isn't scared of blood. He doesn't have to be a vampire, but he must be okay with getting vagina blood all over him.

Hope this answers your question! XO

Leah McSweeney is founder and CEO of Married to the Mob clothing line and cohost of the podcast Improper Etiquette, with hip-hop radio personality Laura Stylez.

AFTER A DAY OF STUPID...

OUR MONTHLY SEARCH FOR STUFF THAT WON'T DENT YOUR IQ.

MOST of us encounter a little stupid during our days. It could be while commuting, at work, in our social media feeds. As for the world at large, well, no one would mistake it for a planet run by people high on that smart pill Bradley Cooper downed in *Limitless*.

Which brings us to our newest column! Its premise is simple: Each month we'll look for stuff we like to think marks out a stupid-free zone in the space allotted.

That's the hope anyway.

To kick things off, here in the Money Issue, we've put together a stack of ten great podcasts that all in their different ways open vaults of astute, actionable money guidance. We're living in a podcast golden age, and money is one of the hottest areas. Dozens of finance professionals are digitizing what they know and offering it on iTunes and elsewhere. They're joined by assorted civilians equipped with hard-earned knowledge and reliable bullshit-detectors.

In a crowded field, here are ten money-talking voices that stand out.

LISTEN MONEY MATTERS

Its motto? *Not your father's boring finance show*. Hosted by two funny, candid, relatable young guys, one a former investment bank data manager, LMM is rock-solid on budgeting, debt reduction, investing, and income growth. Crack open a beer while you listen to Andrew and Thomas banter and advise.

Sample show: What the Fk is Dollar Cost Averaging?**

WE STUDY BILLIONAIRES

The hosts have business, aerospace engineering, West Point, and Harvard backgrounds. One's a Warren Buffett ace. They focus on how billionaires became billionaires. Life journeys, habits, and insights. They sift books by and about these titans, interview experts, and also hit hot investment topics.

Sample billionaires: Bill Gates, Richard Branson, Howard Schultz, Mark Cuban

SO MONEY

Fronted by business writer, financial strategist, and TV journalist Farnoosh Torabi, So Money, thanks to its dynamic host, features smart, entertaining interviews with business leaders and other high achievers. She focuses on their inspirations and stories. On weekends, she takes listener questions.

Sample question: How ridiculous would it be to close my credit cards and start over?

STACKING BENJAMINS

Anchored by a former financial planner turned radio money-advice guy, this rollicking podcast hits a lot of material fast, with multiple guests, daily headlines, fun facts, and humor. The show spotlights wealth builders, debt escapers, financial heavyweights. "Best personal finance podcast of 2016," said *Kiplinger*.

Sample joke: SB claims to broadcast from the host's mom's basement

THE RICH DAD RADIO SHOW

This huge-audience podcast delivers on its "in your face advice" promise. Outspoken Robert Kiyosaki, author of the 1997 best-seller *Rich Dad, Poor Dad,* upends conventional money and economic wisdom. The rebel-entrepreneur interviews a range of business, finance, and self-improvement guests.

Sample show: Fierce Talk–How a Single Conversation Can Make or Break Your Business...

ENTREPRENEURS ON FIRE

Got an idea for a business? Ready to take a risk? This show interviews successful entrepreneurs. Downloaded more than 40 million times, Fire gets guests to explore their failures and worst experiences, along with *aha!* moments

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / PANCHENKO VLADIMIR

and career ascents. A question lightning-round yields more advice nuggets.

Sample guests: Tim Ferriss, Seth Godin, Gary Vaynerchuk

INVESTOR IN THE FAMILY

Founder Brian Bain doesn't come at you with bells and whistles or get-rich-quick claims. The appeal of this podcast is his grounded, regular-guy approach. He had to learn investing and now he wants to help you learn. Investor guests assist him. With Brian, it's like having...an investor in the family.

Sample investment idea: Why farmland and agri-business are worth a look

BAD WITH MONEY

Comedian Gaby Dunn gets personal, drawing not on money expertise, but on her anxieties and money hang-ups. Experts handle the financial illumination; she handles the jokes, stories, and chats with actors, musicians, and others. Topics include freelance life, marriage, debt. The vibe? Fun, real, lively.

Sample show: Banks Are Evil

RADICAL PERSONAL FINANCE

Want to improve your financial situation? This might be your show. Financial planner Joshua Sheats, a legit money brainiac, shares everything he knows, and taps other experts for insights. He can help you redesign your life in ways small and large to reach the promised land of money independence.

Sample show: My Plan for How I Would Become a Millionaire With a Minimum-Wage Job at Walmart

MONEY TREE INVESTING PODCAST

The genius of this show is the bandwidth of perspective. Instead of one voice, you get four: an entrepreneur, a financial planner, a finance blogger, and a financial advisor. One of them interviews an expert guest, then the whole panel weighs in on what's been said. Voilà, reach and depth.

Sample show: Worst Financial Advice From Podcasts

WHITE LIGHT/WHITE HEAT

We bet most of us would love a day in bed with Paige Evans. Just look at her. A natural beauty who's full in all the right places, this Australian stunner had us hooked the minute she walked in the door. Paige breathes new life into the term "sweater girl."

Photography: Tony Veziris

SHE DESERVES IT

SPOIL HER ROTTEN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK.

TOP

By
Lucy Dove

1

GLOSSIER PHASE 1 SET

$40

Glossier's fresh, simple beauty products have women of all ages over the moon. This great starter set for your lady includes their Milky Jelly Cleanser, Priming Moisturizer, and all-over salve, Balm Dotcom.

glossier.com

SEPHORA
Green tea sleeping mask

2

SEPHORA SLEEPING MASK

$5

With over ten different rich, creamy masks infused with unique ingredients (like honey, lotus, and ginseng) to help any other problem your girl complains about, these make excellent stocking stuffers.

sephora.com

3

GLOSSIER BODY HERO DUO

$35

This body wash and skin cream set promises (and delivers) dewy, fresh skin.

glossier.com

BODY HERO
BODY HERO

4

BAIES SCENTED CANDLE BY DIPTYQUE

$34-$64

This is the crème de la crème of scented candles. Grab her two. It's the holidays, dude.

nordstrom.com

diptyque
34 boulevard saint germain
FEU DE BOIS
paris 5e

MISSONI PASCAL THROW BLANKET

5

$660

This is the perfect cashmere throw blanket that will look good on any piece of furniture.

nordstrom.com

6

VICTORIA'S SECRET SATIN KIMONO

$49.50

A simple, silky robe that has enough sex appeal to make her feel good and you feel horny.

victoriassecret.com

8

THE PERFECT V

$34-$46

The Perfect V is a beauty line specially designed for down there. Featuring peach kernel oil and rosa damascena flower water, these unique luxury toiletries will keep her pH-balanced and feeling amazing.

theperfectv.com

THE PERFECT
V
—VV—
CREAM
GENTLE
WASH
Beauty Wash for the V
Cleanse. Tone. Refresh
Nordic Purity
Inspired by Scandinavia

10

7

MARC JACOBS RILEY WATCH 36mm

$200

We know that watches seem unnecessary these days now that our iPhones are practically sewn to our palms, but there is something classic and elegant about a wristwatch. This Marc Jacobs timepiece is both stunning and modest.

marcjacobs.com

MARC
MARC JACOBS

SAGITTARIUS

9

GOOD AMERICAN ZODIAC SWEATER

$149

This super soft crewneck sweatshirt is 90 percent cotton and 10 percent spandex, and made in the U.S.A. Though none of this will matter since she'll be so shocked you even know her star sign.

nordstrom.com

10

ORA LEATHER "COCO" BAG

$260

The "Coco" Bag is a classic leather tote that's perfect for every occasion, plus it's handmade in Canada.

oraleathergoods.com

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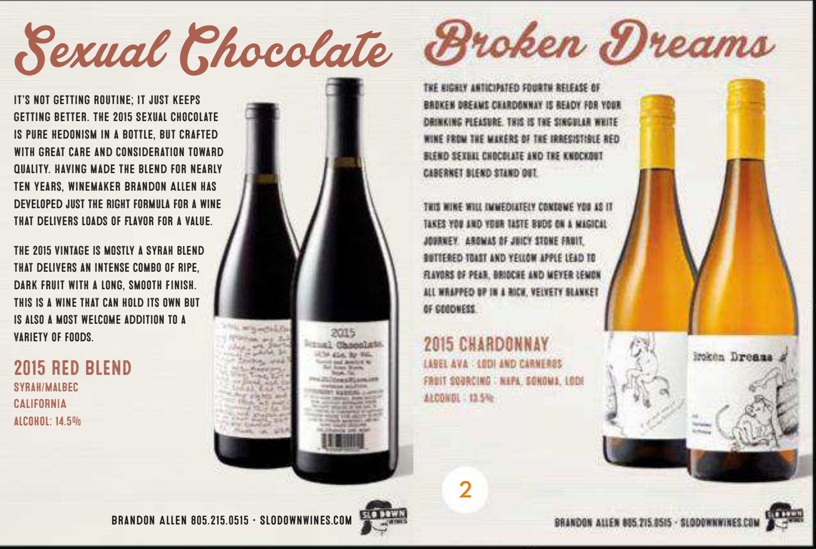

Sexual Chocolate

IT'S NOT GETTING ROUTINE; IT JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER. THE 2015 SEXUAL CHOCOLATE IS PURE HEDONISM IN A BOTTLE, BUT CRAFTED WITH GREAT CARE AND CONSIDERATION TOWARD QUALITY. HAVING MADE THE BLEND FOR NEARLY TEN YEARS, WINEMAKER BRANDON ALLEN HAS DEVELOPED JUST THE RIGHT FORMULA FOR A WINE THAT DELIVERS LOADS OF FLAVOR FOR A VALUE.

THE 2015 VINTAGE IS MOSTLY A SYRAH BLEND THAT DELIVERS AN INTENSE COMBO OF RIPE, DARK FRUIT WITH A LONG, SMOOTH FINISH. THIS IS A WINE THAT CAN HOLD ITS OWN BUT IS ALSO A MOST WELCOME ADDITION TO A VARIETY OF FOODS.

2015 RED BLEND

SYRAH/MALBEC
CALIFORNIA
ALCOHOL: 14.5%

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THIS WINE WILL IMMEDIATELY CONSUME YOU AS IT TAKES YOU AND YOUR TASTE BUDS ON A MAGICAL JOURNEY. AROMAS OF JUICY STONE FRUIT, BUTTERED TOAST AND YELLOW APPLE LEAD TO FLAVORS OF PEAR, BRIOCHE AND MEYER LEMON ALL WRAPPED UP IN A RICH, VELVETY BLANKET OF GOODNESS.

2015 CHARDONNAY

LABEL AVA : LODI AND CARNEROS
FRUIT SOURCING : NAPA, SONOMA, LODI
ALCOHOL : 13.5%

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2015
Sexual Chocolate
Broken Dreams
SLO DOWN WINES

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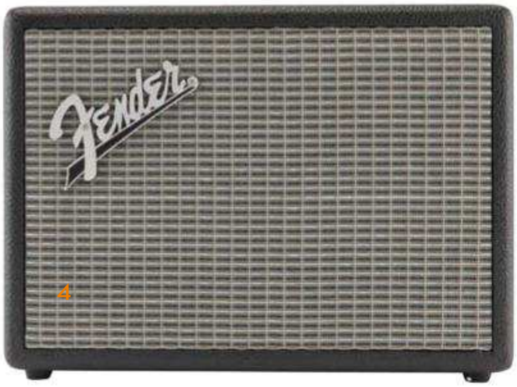

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SHAVE CREAM
SHAVE SOAP

7

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8

RAW generation
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PEPPERMINT CACAO COCONUT

YOUR HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE

BECAUSE YOU NEED TO TREAT YOURSELF SO YOUR HEAD DOESN'T EXPLODE.

BY GEORGE GLASS

1 / Urban Armor Gear Macbook Pro Case
$80 urbanarmorgear.com
This is a bulletproof vest for any of your tech devices, and a holiday survival essential. With an armor shell, impact-resistant bumpers, and a dual-lock secure screen closure, your sticky-fingered nephew could drop your MacBook a hundred times and it won't see a scratch. The case passes military drop-test standards, so it can handle a nosedive from Junior's lap to the hardwood floor.

2 / SLO Down Wines
$19 slodownwines.com
A lot of us don't know our ass from our elbow when it comes to wine, but SLO Down Wines are a sure thing. The names alone will be a great conversation starter, but their Sexual Chocolate Malbec 2014, Stand Out Cabernet Sauvignon, and Broken Dreams Chardonnay are delicious, too. Not necessarily for wine snobs, just the rest of us who want a bold glass of red to go with our rich holiday feast.

3 / Fender Monterey Bluetooth Speaker
$350 hammacher.com
Pretend to be a teenager again with this killer portable speaker. It looks exactly like a practice amp and connects to your device via AUX or Bluetooth so you can blast your favorite Steely Dan album loud as fuck. Plant this baby in the garage, tell the kids hands off, and escape to your safe zone.

4 / No Hangover Patches
$10 for two patches nohangoverpatch.com
How could something that looks like a clear Band-Aid help kick a whiskey headache? I was shocked to the core that this thing actually worked. I drank like an alcoholic on his last binge before hitting rehab, and even though I was tired the next day, I had no headache, nausea, or urge to vomit. Yeah, the lights were still way too bright and everyone needed to be put on mute, but I survived.

5 / Nordstrom Four-Piece Stainless Steel & Wood Bar Set
$60 nordstrom.com
You don't need to be a douchebag "mixologist" to own a good set of mixing tools. Think of this as the cordless sander of your kitchen. The set includes a two-sided jigger, spring-coil strainer, bar spoon, muddler, and a matching wood stand. Now all you need is the booze and you're good to go.

6 / Nordstrom Stainless Steel Cocktail Shaker
$39 nordstrom.com
It's just good common sense to own a decent cocktail shaker. We know you'll be enjoying your own bourbon neat as a nightcap, but your wife's friends will be so impressed that you can shake up a vodka martini faster than they can say, "Where's my drink, damnit?"

7 / Olivina Men Grooming Essentials Kit
$100 olivinamen.com
We know there are a million different shave clubs, kits, and various razors that claim they're the best, but Olivina Men is doing something different. Maybe their marketing is that much savvier? Whatever the reason, this kit includes shave soap, a chrome razor with five blades, conditioning shave cream, two-in-one shave prep and beard oil, a canvas travel bag, and cologne. Everything in here is bourbon-cedar scented, so if you're more of a white-wine-spritzer guy, may we suggest Skinny Girl products?

8 / Raw Generation Holiday Cocktail Smoothie Duo
$200 rawgeneration.com
A juice diet during the holidays? Are we HIGH? Of course, but hear us out. There's nothing better than a smoothie the day after a boozefest, and these 100 percent raw smoothies are freaking good. Dashing & Decadent is filled with cashews, cinnamon, Himalayan salt, and nutmeg, while Cool & Creamy has raw cacao, dates, peppermint, and coconut milk mixed into a plant-based protein. Add a splash to your cocktail, your morning joe, or just chug one to kill your hangover. They may look like puke, but they taste like desert.

9 / Goodwipes
$7 goodwipes.com
These alcohol- and paraben-free wipes designed specifically for men are 100 percent flushable, biodegradable, and have a mild cedar scent. Keep a box in your bathroom, and another in your suitcase for when you travel. No shame.

10 / Moment Tele Lens
$60 shopmoment.com
This simple clip-on metal lens attaches to both iPhone and Android products, and has topped the lists of all attachable smartphone lenses, and for good reason. It's resilient, effective, and makes your photos that much better, adding depth, clarity, and focus. Backed by both the *Wall Street Journal* and the Wirecutter, you'll be taking the best pics this holiday season. Con? Now you have to deal with the irritating task of emailing them out to all of your ding-dong relatives.

10

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / NESTUDIO

GOOD TRAINING

OVER HERE, “SAFE” TRAINING SAVES LIVES. OVER THERE, IT ENDS THEM.

BY MATT GALLAGHER

THE closest I came to death from my time in the military (that I know of, at least) happened in early 2008 in Iraq. My platoon rolled into the middle of a firefight involving insurgents, the Iraqi army, and the armed neighborhood watch known as the Sons of Iraq. (Remember those jackalopes?) The rounds fired our way pinged around heads, bouncing off the Strykers and through the buildings behind us—close enough for that oh-so-distinctive *whistle-whistle-crack* effect. Ah, memories.

We had a few other hairy situations with IEDs and IED emplacers, but nothing too wild. We were lucky. In fact, my second closest brush with the Reaper in the military didn’t happen in combat, or in Iraq at all. It happened in Hawaii, during a training mission.

We were off the coast, flying to Wheeler Army Airfield in helicopters, with endless Pacific blue under us. We were cav scouts—the ground-pounding kind—in the back and headed home, already planning out our weekends. Then the Chinook dropped and kept dropping, and in those mad, dizzying seconds, I felt certain we were all going to die then and there.

We didn’t, obviously. Praise all three parts of the Holy Trinity for those pilots and their cool-as-the-other-side-of-the-pillow life approach. They righted that bird and got us all home safe. It was close, though, or at least close-ish. Too close-ish for this scribe remembering it a decade later. My stomach still clenches up when I think about it.

Just like in Iraq, we got lucky. That’s war’s (and training’s) dirty little not-so-secret: the power, and importance, of good chance. I thought of that good chance (and many, too many, of my friends’ bad chance) during the various military training accidents across the globe in late summer and fall. The Navy warship collision east of Singapore. The *USS Fitzgerald*’s collision with a container ship near Japan. The Special Forces “Q Course” soldier killed on the firing range in September. The downed Black Hawk off Kaena Point in Hawaii—the very same area where our Chinook fought for flight ten years ago.

And those are just four recent examples. According to the Department of Defense, over 50 servicemembers were killed

JUST LIKE IN IRAQ, WE GOT LUCKY. THAT'S WAR'S (AND TRAINING'S) DIRTY LITTLE NOT-SO-SECRET: THE POWER, AND IMPORTANCE, OF GOOD CHANCE.

or wounded in training incidents this summer alone. Senator John McCain, ever a guiding light on issues of defense and the application of military manpower, wrote in a statement: “Four times as many servicemembers died during routine training in the last three years than in combat.”

“These incidents,” McCain continued, “demonstrate the current over-taxed state of our military both at home and overseas, and the failure of Congress and the president to give our troops the training, resources, and equipment they need.”

Whoa. Say what you will about the ol’ Arizona battle-ax (and plenty’s been said recently, from the far left and far right), but he’s not one to shy away from bluntness. The Straight Talk Express, baby!

But about that “over-taxed state”—what’s to be done, really? The war in Afghanistan isn’t going anywhere. In fact, President Trump recently committed to a sort of “mini-surge” there. The campaigns in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere will continue to ebb and flow—all part of the Global War on Terror that has now achieved un-ironic Forever War status. If my infant son ends up joining the military, will he fight terrorism, too? Yeah, probably. The truth is, the military has been over-taxed for years. Another dark truth: It will remain over-taxed for years to come.

But these training deaths can’t continue. Not like this. There’s some acceptance of risk here, of course—the chance of becoming an unfortunate statistic is “part of the job description,” as any good NCO will tell you—but when a young soldier or Marine or sailor has a better chance of getting killed training for war than actually, you know, in war itself, we have a systemic problem on our hands.

We had a term in the Army for the reactionary, hyper-cautious mentality that arose from leadership after training went awry: “zero defect.” In our era (God, that makes me sound old—when the fuck did that happen?), we tied the zero-defect mentality to the lessons learned from Desert Storm, where more soldiers were killed and injured by fratricide than by enemy combatants. (This also led to a lot of grisly jokes about the competence/shooting prowess of Saddam’s military, but I digress.)

So what happens now? I hope I’m wrong, but history’s as good a guidepost as any—in this case, the trajectory post-Vietnam, post-Desert Storm, and post-Kosovo. Media attention and Congressional inquiries lead to more scrutiny on small-unit training operations and missions. More scrutiny means “safer” training, and if nothing else, “safer” means fewer real-life scenarios (say, shoot-house training with live rounds) and more scripted training.

More scripted training translates to less prepared young servicemembers. There’s no replication for direct experience, of course, but good training—as opposed to training for the sake of training—aspires to come close. But as explored already, good training is risky. Safe training will save lives over here. But over there? Over there, safe training ends lives, because the real-life scenarios are being experienced for the first time.

The irony of it all is that dead soldiers at war is the expected headline. It takes them dying stateside to get attention and concern now. So goes the loop of perpetual war in twenty-first-century America. Embrace the Suck, indeed.

Matt Gallagher is a U.S. Army veteran of Iraq and the author of the novel Youngblood (Atria/Simon & Schuster).

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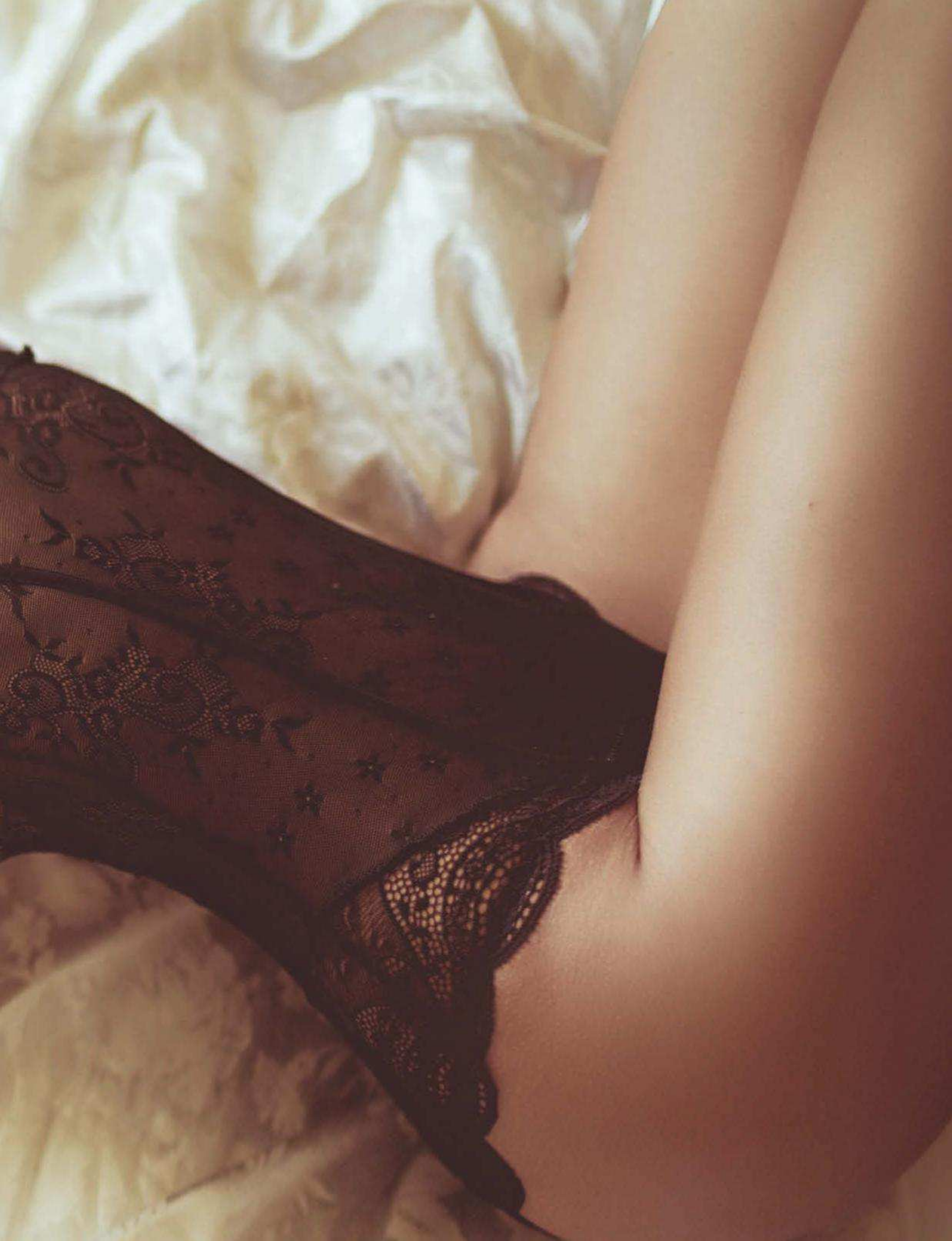

HONESTY

ONE GUY'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT TO BELIEVE.

BY JOE DEROSA

"Honesty is the best policy."– Benjamin Franklin

WHILE keeping the above quote in mind, indulge me while I offer another: "If honesty were suddenly introduced into American life, the whole system would collapse."

So said George Carlin, in his 1999 HBO special *You Are All Diseased*. And here we are, almost 20 years later, amidst what appears to be the collapse. We've finally been granted the truth and its face is ugly, its embrace is cold, and its strike is hard.

Honesty has not only arrived, it has us surrounded. The curtain's been pulled back, yanked down, and burnt to a crisp. Welcome to the 24-hour news cycle, cameras, snitches, and snoops hiding in every corner, precognitive smartphones alerting us to every blip on the radar before it even happens. And as we take a long and painfully revealing look at the true nature of humankind—corrupt politicians, crooked shamans, cheating business moguls, and the rest—the comfort of enlightenment is nowhere to be found.

We've made "truth" synonymous with "information" and that's just not always the case. Sometimes truth is just some haunting shit you didn't want to know. As a result of this information onslaught, many of us are panicked and unsettled, ceaselessly reminded of our present crass reality. That's only natural. But few in the pack seem to have any idea that they had a role in crafting it. We spew unfiltered thoughts on social media platforms—some of this stuff impacting the livelihoods, opportunities, relationships, and dignity of ourselves and others. But try taking Twitter away from people (and I'm referring to the adults here) and I'd bet you'd see a wave of tantrums—emotional, physical, and violent. We pat ourselves on the back for clumsy opinions, arrogant assumptions, and only apologize sarcastically: "Sorry, I'm a bitch." But try telling people—again, the adults—that they need to shut the fuck up and listen once in a while, and my guess is their response would be far from "I'm all ears."

Pompous entitlement disguised as the pursuit of happiness has Americans devolving into the brattiest of children—all of them demanding they get what they want as soon as they need it. And the most demented of any of these "yearnings" is this call for truth. Because the thing people never count on is the truth they get not being the one they identify or agree with. At the end of the day, people don't want the actual truth. They want a certain version of it: one containing jokes that don't offend them, images that don't disturb them, and news that doesn't break them.

Look at our president. At long last, we have a truly transparent commander in chief—someone who doesn't do the dance, mince words, or give a rat's ass about his critics. He just stays the course; no tact, no grace, no apologies. And is that a relief to the public? Not quite. Our candid leader doesn't soothe or reassure us. He just plops his figurative dick on the Oval Office desk and lets the entire free world know he doesn't give a fuck. (Granted, Bill Clinton had his actual dick on the desk, but we never got to see it because it was always in somebody's mouth. I believe that's called damage control. I don't know about you, but I'll take the unseen literal dick over being smacked in the face with the metaphoric one any day of the week.)

Don't get me wrong, Trump lies as much as any of his predecessors, but he's the first president to do so while letting us know he's in on the charade. I haven't seen a guy noncommittally mail in a script like him since De Niro's last seven movies. So, Donald is dogshit. And so was Hillary Clinton. She's a demon disguised as a devil. But "disguised" is the key word here. She knows how to sell a fib. I like that. When it comes to the big stuff, deceit helps me sleep at night.

I'm not pigheaded or stupid enough to think I can handle knowing all the dirty secrets of the powers that be because I occasionally browse WikiLeaks or watch CNN or Fox News in the morning. There's a reason the government has security clearances: The more you know, the more rotten you are. It takes a special kind of centered scum to know just how dirty this world's hands can get. I'm proud of the fact that I don't fit that bill. You should be, too. Since when did keeping certain information from certain individuals become such a bad thing? In the mob, it's what keeps you alive. At work, it's what keeps you

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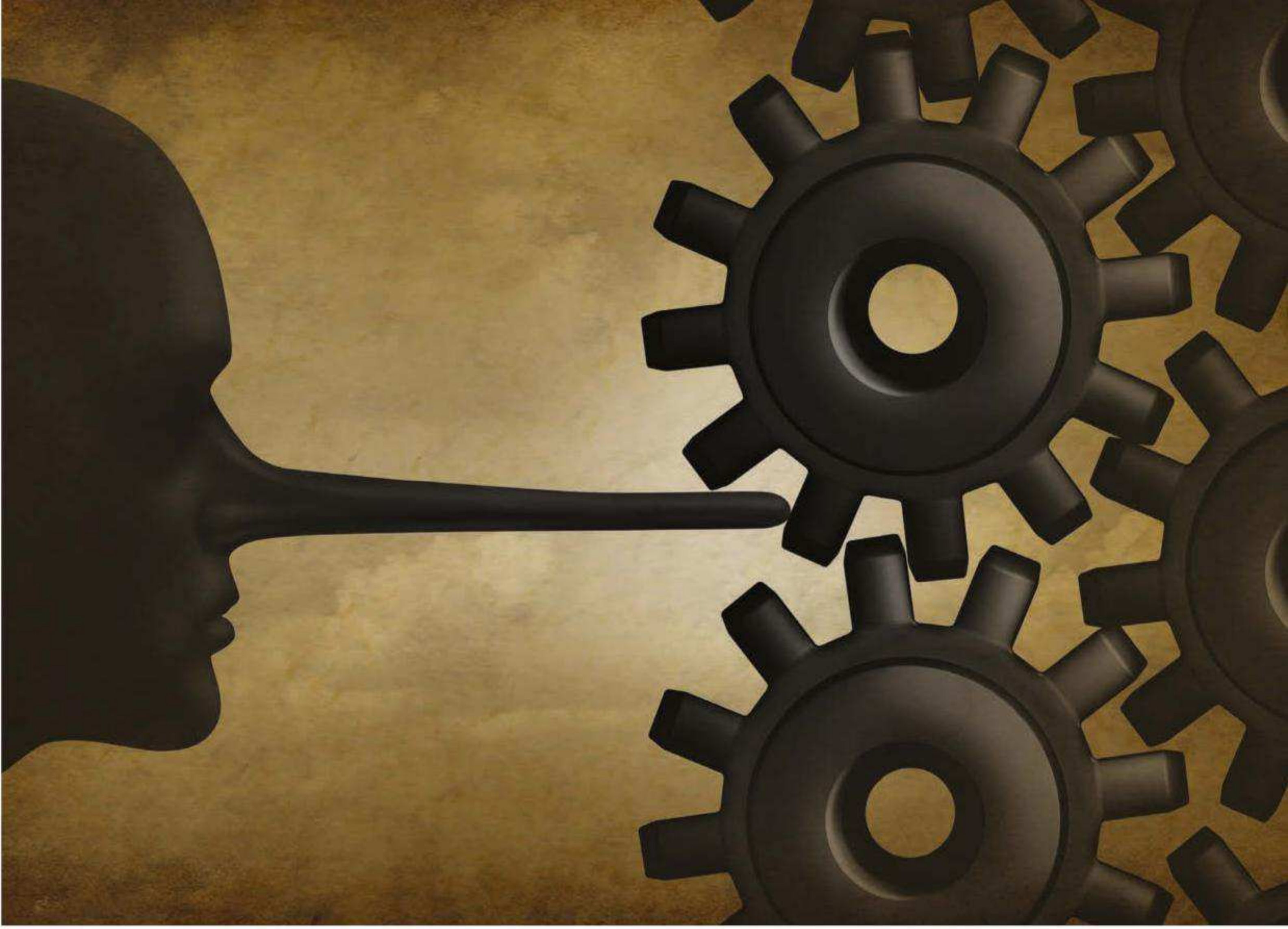

WE'VE MADE "TRUTH" SYNONYMOUS WITH "INFORMATION" AND THAT'S JUST NOT ALWAYS THE CASE.

sane. In a marriage, it's what keeps it working.

When I was a kid, we were broke. My parents lived paycheck to paycheck, carried massive amounts of credit card debt, and owned a house they could barely make payments on. They were living the 1980s American dream. But you know what? I was never aware of the severity of the situation until I hit college. My mom and dad kept the illusion of stability going. They knew, eventually, we'd make it through the tough times and there was no point in panicking a kid, even one who thought he could handle anything. I'm so grateful my folks did that. It allowed me to enjoy my childhood, even if all the perks weren't there. Had I known of their financial crisis, what was I going to do? Get a job? Chip in? Take out a loan? I was nine years old, for Christ's sakes. I would've shit my pants and cried.

All this truth, all this honesty, all this realness…it's worthless. There's nothing we can do with the information. It's just a miserable burden. I know plenty of people reading this will disagree with that, and to them I say, "Have fun screaming into the deaf ears on the internet and arguing at parties instead of drinking and making memories with your friends."

Honesty is undoubtedly not the best policy. Sure, honesty is truth, truth is knowledge, and knowledge is power. Some of that is great—too much will drive you crazy. I know most of you hated or avoided *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,* but trust me, just go watch the climactic scene of that movie. Cate Blanchett's stereotypical Russian character gets too much knowledge shot into her brain by the stereotypical alien character. Then her head explodes or some shit. It's bad. But here's the kicker: She asks the alien to do it! She thinks it will enlighten her! Wrong.

Enough with the enlightenment. Take all the info in sparingly. Make a greater habit out of dimming your lights, drawing your blinds, and hanging out reminiscing with people you've known all your life. But please remember: If any one of them ever says that "honesty is the best policy," that person's probably a lying prick.

Joe DeRosa is an L.A.-based comedian, writer, director, and actor (Better Call Saul, Louie). His stand-up is available online, along with his podcasts We'll See You in Hell and Emotional Hangs. Follow him @joederosacomedy

BIG GIRLS ARE BETTER

MY twin sister's college friend Elizabeth was beautiful but didn't know it. Insecure about her weight and frame, she always dressed in baggy clothes that covered everything. But I'd noticed her curves right away, and she had a face that you'd see in a magazine—perfect skin, big green eyes, soft dark hair to her shoulders. Skinny women have never been my type. Elizabeth was my type.

When she came to visit us one summer, I flirted with her relentlessly. I was always checking her out—and she noticed. My sister said she didn't have a ton of luck with guys, but when we talked, even though she could be a little shy, she always had this glint of mischief in her eyes, and a great laugh. I didn't like to see her sweltering under her clothes—and it was a typical hot North Carolina August during her visit.

On her last night, we had a campfire with a bunch of friends in the backyard. I went into the house to get more beer and saw Elizabeth at the kitchen table. When I asked why she was there, she said it was just too hot outside. I asked if she wanted to borrow some of my clothes, knowing that she couldn't fit into my sister's. She hesitated at first but then nodded. I brought her a tank top and a pair of shorts.

When she came outside I wasn't the only guy to appreciate the wardrobe change. Standing there in the firelight, she was voluptuous, with these huge triple-D tits, the round tops of them busting out of the tank top. Her hips in the shorts curved sexily, and when she walked in front of me to a lawn chair, her full ass looked amazing.

Trying not to stare too much, I told her she should wear my clothes all the time and she laughed. For the rest of the evening I caught her looking at me across the fire.

Eventually the little party broke up. We said good-bye to our friends, and Elizabeth, my sister, and I went inside. An hour or so later, buzzed from beer, I heard a soft knock at my bedroom door. Then a sweet Southern voice whispered, "It's Elizabeth."

I was wearing just my boxers and was headed to the door when it opened. "Thank you for letting me borrow your stuff," she said, extending the clothes toward me. Then she just kind of stood there. I noticed how plush her lips were. She was in a bathrobe, cinched at the waist, her face was glowing, and her cleavage looked sexy as hell.

She held my gaze. Her big breasts pushed out the front of the robe. Was she waiting for me to make a move? I was getting hard, right there in the doorway.

I WANTED THAT ASS ON MY FACE AND I WHISPERED, "SIT ON MY FACE, BEAUTIFUL."

"You're beautiful, you know that?" I said.

Elizabeth smiled. I leaned forward and kissed her. She slipped her hands around my waist and pulled me closer, my cock pressing against her. As we made out in that spot, I moved my hands down to her ass in the robe. It was round and felt surprisingly firm. My cock got harder.

"Come in here," I whispered, taking her hand, closing the door, and leading her to my bed. I laid her down and slowly opened her robe, moving my lips down to her mounded breasts. Her curves were just what I'd pictured—she was like a classical painting come to life.

I moved one hand down to her pussy and her snug slit was very wet already. I traced my fingers up and down it, and then circled her clit with a finger. She moaned a little, and I stripped off my boxers, straddled her, and put my cock between her tits.

Elizabeth pressed her enormous breasts together and the friction was perfect in that warm, glistening crease—I had a raging hard-on, and she just looked up at me with her big wide eyes as I slid my cock back and forth.

Thinking about how great her ass felt through the robe, I turned her over, placed my cock between her luscious cheeks, and started moving my hips back and forth again, the head of my shaft passing her over tight asshole.

I wanted that ass on my face and I whispered, "Sit on my face, beautiful." She moved into the sixty-nine position. The slit of her pussy, her full ass and hips, that tiny asshole—as I took in the view, reclined on the bed, Elizabeth moved her mouth down to my cock and started licking and sucking. Within seconds I felt on the edge of coming. I flicked her clit with my tongue, then moved my face closer and sucked. She moaned and started bucking her hips a little, her ass pressing into my face, her mouth humming my cock in rhythm to the motion of her hips.

She began to buck even more, smothering my face, and then she let out a long, high moan, coming hard, her whole body writhing. Seconds after that, her mouth went back to my cock, her pussy held just above my face, her hips swaying back and forth slowly. She sucked more of my dick this time, taking it far down her throat.

Barely aware of it, I started thrusting my own hips up and down, getting close, and then she reached a hand to my balls and gently touched them with warm fingers and I exploded, shooting come down her throat.

We kept at it until late. After a rest, we fucked. Elizabeth came again, and then I went back to her behind, returning my cock to that crease between her shapely cheeks, sliding my dick back and forth, teasing her hole with the tip of it, and when I couldn't hold back anymore, I came again, this time on that sweet ass of hers.

AS I STEPPED OUT OF MY PANTIES, I GLANCED OVER AND SAW ELAINE ON TOP OF MY BOYFRIEND, RIDING HIM REVERSE-COWGIRL.

We only had that one time together. Elizabeth graduated and moved out of state. But I still think about that night. Especially since the memories come right back any time I open a clothes drawer and see a certain tank top or pair of shorts.

—Spencer H., Raleigh, North Carolina

THE GREAT SWAP

MATT and I went to our friends' last house party with only one objective in mind: to swap partners with Elaine and Ralph. The two of them are in an open relationship, and Matt and I swing, so we knew it was possible. We'd wanted to swap with them for months, but we'd never really had the chance. Their party seemed like the perfect opportunity.

We had a great time drinking and talking with everyone, and the rowdy game of charades that broke out was surprisingly entertaining, but we couldn't wait for things to wind down. As people started to leave, Matt and I made a point of offering to help clean up. It would get us alone with our hosts and open the door for some sexy swapping.

After the last guest left, Matt and Elaine started picking up glasses while Ralph and I rinsed out beer bottles and gathered dishes. I started flirting with Ralph as soon as we were alone in the kitchen, touching his arm and bumping into him whenever I tried to move around the room. He flirted right back, copping a feel whenever he could and saying everything in a suggestive manner. Even "You wash, I'll dry" managed to sound dirty when Ralph said it.

When Ralph accidentally splashed some water on me, it soaked through my thin white T-shirt. I playfully started to fight him, pretending he'd done it on purpose. In the middle of our struggle, Ralph grabbed my head in his hands and pulled me in for a hot kiss. I dropped the sponge I was holding and kissed him back, forgetting all about the dishes.

As we kissed, my wet hands traveled under his tight T-shirt while he worked his fingers into the waist of my jeans. We touched each other everywhere we could reach, and when we ran out of readily available flesh, we started pulling off each other's clothes.

As we stripped, shirts flew one way and jeans the other, but it wasn't until we were down to our underwear that we realized we didn't want to get it on in the messy kitchen. Ralph grabbed my hand then and pulled me into the living room, but he stopped almost as soon as he walked through the doorway. On the futon across the room were Matt and Elaine, already mid-fuck. Our partners had obviously gotten a head start.

Ralph and I watched them for a minute, then he dragged me toward the couch. He sat down, pulled me into his lap, and resumed kissing and fondling me.

Ralph made a move to unclasp my bra, and as soon as it was off, he leaned in to suck my tits. He laved my nipples with his tongue, then traced circles around each one. He was driving me crazy, and I started moaning, my noises blending with the moans and groans coming from across the room. He kept at my nipples for a while, until I pushed him away to take a turn at sucking and kissing his earlobes. I felt his cock twitch against me through our underwear as I nipped and sucked on his neck and ears.

We finally stood up from the couch and pulled off our underwear. As I stepped out of my panties, I glanced over and saw Elaine on top of my boyfriend, riding him reverse-cowgirl. They were maybe ten feet away from us, so close that I could almost reach out and touch them, and watching them going at it really got my juices flowing.

Once Ralph had his underwear off, he pulled me back on the couch. He put one knee on the cushion and left his other foot on the floor, then pulled me into his lap, angling my hips upward. As he slid his cock into me, the position made him go deeper than his seven-inch cock should have allowed, and he filled me perfectly.

Ralph had me gasping from the first

thrust, and I only got louder as he picked up his pace. As he continued fucking me, he used one hand to hold me in place while he moved his other hand to my pussy and rubbed my clit. While he was focused on me, I turned my head to look at my boyfriend. Elaine had turned around by then and Matt was sucking her tits while they fucked.

Watching the other two humping each other was arousing, and the more I watched them, the harder I tried to meet Ralph stroke for stroke.

Ralph kept increasing the pace as he fucked me, and soon he was banging me hard, his balls slapping against my ass. His finger was moving faster on my clit, and my climax built as we fucked. I felt my body tingling with pleasure, and then it seemed as if waves of excitement were washing over me. Ralph made me come faster than anyone ever had, but he didn't stop fucking me. He didn't even slow down.

He pounded away, bringing me to a second, equally explosive climax before he finally came himself, pulling out in time to shoot his load across my stomach. I love watching my partners come, and I loved that Ralph knew to do it without being told.

After he came, we collapsed on the couch before turning to see what the other two were doing. I'd been so caught up in my own pleasure that I hadn't been paying attention to them, and I saw that they'd finished, too, and were curled up on the futon, half asleep.

Ralph and I rested for a few minutes, catching our breath, then took a shower together, fucking one more time. By the time we'd finished, Matt and Elaine were awake. Matt and I left then, but as soon as we got home, we celebrated our successful swap with a wild fuck before crawling into bed for some much-needed sleep.

—Rebecca R., Longview, Texas

GOD IS GOOD

WHEN I was a freshman in college there was this odd, mousy girl named Althea who always sat alone in the common room, reading books about God and drinking tea.

My friends and I would rampage through at all hours, acting like typical drunken idiots, and Althea would be there on the corner of a couch, never acknowledging us in any way. We knew she had transferred from some Bible college and that she lived alone in a small room at the end of a hall—most likely because she was too awkward and religious to deal with a roommate.

Althea wore pointy nerd glasses and had pale, ghostly skin, but her body was slamming. She never wore a bra—I guess she didn't think anyone was thinking impure thoughts—and her nipples were always poking through her shirt. I decided to make it my mission to penetrate to the mysterious core of this silent girl who seemed to have more interest in the spirit than the flesh.

She needed to like me first. I started off mellow, just greeting her whenever I walked by. She'd bury her head deeper into her book, but after a few days, she blushed and smiled back.

Next, I upped the ante. I'd sit down next to her, close enough to look into her eyes, and pretend to be curious about what she was reading. Not long after she'd finished a book about Mother Theresa, I asked if I could borrow it. She seemed enthusiastic at my interest and told me to come get the book from her room. Following her down the hall, I still wasn't sure if she liked me, but I had to at least try.

Althea's room was small and sparse with nothing on the white walls except a wooden cross, a framed photo of Jesus, and a Bible verse she had printed off the computer. There was barely room to stand, so I sat at the edge of the bed as she went to her little book shelf. I was expecting her to give me the book and show me the door.

But instead, Althea spun around and smiled at me. The book wasn't in her hands. Then she dropped to her knees. Was she going to start praying for forgiveness for having a man in her room?

Before I could move, she started rubbing my crotch. I was stunned, but her slender, warm hands felt so good as she traced the outside of my cock. She undid my jeans, started licking my stomach, and pulled out my dick. She ran her tongue from the base to the tip, sucking it like a lollipop. I took off her shirt, kissed and licked those amazing tits I'd seen braless so many times, then listened to her moan in my ear as I finger-fucked her wet,

ALTHEA FLIPPED OVER, RAISED HER HEART-SHAPED ASS IN THE AIR, AND BEGGED ME TO FUCK HER DOGGIE-STYLE.

warm pussy. She clenched her muscles around my fingers and dug her nails into the back of my neck.

Suddenly, she pulled away.

"Do you like toys?" she asked.

I nodded. This was too good to pass up.

Althea dug into a dresser drawer and pulled out two vibrators. How was this timid church girl the kinkiest chick I'd ever been with? She got naked and slid onto her single bed. I crawled toward her as she spread her legs and forcefully pushed my head into her golden blonde snatch. I lapped up a taste as she passed me one of the vibrators.

"Just put it in nice and slow," she told me. I turned on the long silicone device and slid it into her hole, exploring deeper with each thrust. She moaned and pulled me closer between her legs, as I kept pumping the toy into her pussy. She rubbed her breasts and rolled her head back in pleasure.

I pulled the buzzing toy out of her and gently circled it over her clit. She grabbed my face and twirled her tongue around mine. She kissed me harder and harder as she got closer. Then I felt her whole body tense and shudder as she came, screaming into my mouth. She shook out every last drop of orgasm she had in her. Althea lost herself completely. And now it was my turn.

She put my cock in her mouth and sucked it passionately with eyes closed, her cheeks shining bright pink. I hadn't noticed it, but she'd snuck the ring vibrator around my shaft. Cradling my cock in her soft mouth, she pressed the ring to the underside of my balls and gave me the best blowjob a man could ever hope for. If it wasn't for Jesus on the wall looking down at me, I would have come in a heartbeat.

After that, Althea flipped over, raised her heart-shaped ass in the air, and begged me to fuck her doggie-style. I slid my cock into her soaking pussy. It felt incredible to fuck her, especially while squeezing and kneading those perfect tits.

She started using the ring on her clit while I pounded away. This must have been the sweet spot for her, because with every thrust she groaned louder. I grabbed her tiny waist and fucked her with everything I had. She pushed her face into the pillow and slammed her fists on the bed, moaning with pleasure.

Just as I was about to explode, I pulled my cock out and I blew a huge load on her sexy ass. She reached back and rubbed my come all over her like lotion, sliding her hand between her ass cheeks.

I fell onto the bed exhausted, drenched in sweat. A second later, I heard a loud whirring noise. I looked over and Althea was on her back, sliding that vibrating plastic cock into her pussy. She had gone from getting fucked by me to fucking herself.

I watched transfixed as this maniac pushed the toy in and out of herself, panting, staring at me with big, blissed-out eyes. Then she slipped the toy out of her pussy and buzzed the tip of it all over her clit. She locked eyes with me, biting her lips, making herself come again.

I was stunned. The shyest girl I knew was an insatiable sex fiend. She made me a believer. While watching Althea give herself multiple orgasms, I thought to myself, *God is good!*

—Chad L., Hendersonville, Tennessee

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I laid her on her back and expressed strokes of oral fondness to her sweet shaven flower which she seemed to be enjoyably sensitive to. I softly licked and gently sucked the magic emanating from her smooth flowery pedals and applied both simultaneously to budding style until she wriggled away.

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

After sipping some champaign, she retreated to the bathroom to change into an exceptionally hot lingerie outfit. Holy mackerel, this young thing oozed sexuality.

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